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Woman's era

POWER OF
A THOUGHT

CARE OF THE
AGING PARENTS

RAISING
VOICES!

A LIBERATION
BRIDGE

PATRIARCHY 2021

INCREASE YOUR
CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

PANDEMIC AND
STUDENTS

TEENAGE PREGNANCY
ABORTION?

LEAPING OR
LIMPING MIND ?

PALPABLE
ALLEGIANCE

FRAME OF
REFERENCE

WE ALL
CAN DO IT!

BEING PARENT V/S
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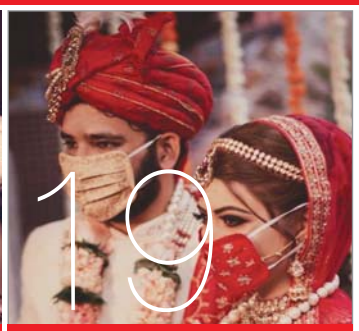
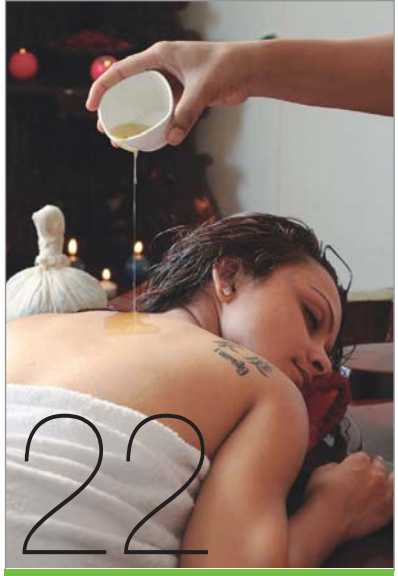


BRIDE, GROOM AND CORONA
MALLIKA

INCREASE YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM
UNMANA DUTTA



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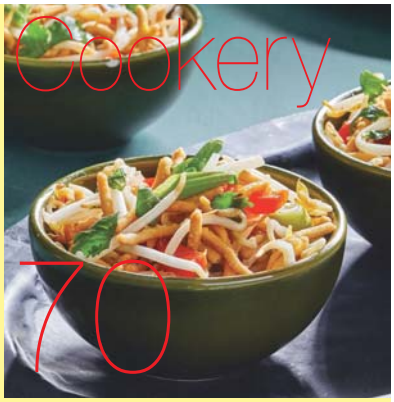

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write@womansera.com
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advertising@womansera.com
3. **To participate in features:**
features@womansera.com
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OFFICES
Mumbai: 1704, Lodha Supremus,
Dr E Moses Marg, Worli Naka,
Worli, Geeta Talkies Building,
Mumbai-400018
Phone: 09810160122

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Aggregate marking schemes

When Delhi University announced that it shall take aggregated marks of students to consider their admission in Delhi University colleges it was quite a blow for students who relied on excellence in their board exams. Though the pandemic era has thrown many challenges to the educational world, it was hoped that the university would conduct exams for admissions. Most of the competitive examinations are being held despite the CBSE's view and the PM's decision not to hold board exams. What is to become of the career of the students, who's marksheet would reveal the Covid Era aggregates only? Basis of education in our society and in the present civilisation is to train the youth to gain a good job.

Gamble of Indian markets

Listing of the Zomato IPO at record levels surpassing the market cap of some of the best Indian companies who have been the fortunes of Indian corporate world, comes with a large as to what the future of business will be. A company which is riddled with losses and still making large ones, funded by the Chinese and unknown heads of the company make it hard to phantom what businesses are really valuable. Though it's a dynamic environment needing change every now and then, to have changes like these is only for the people who play games at the stock markets. Millions of dollars have flown in from China, while we and the government criticizes and bans them for imports, but what about the companies which are Indian and backed completely by the Chinese money- Byju's, PayTM, Zomato etc.?

UP's Population Policy: A Gameplay

UP government's proposed policy on population is surely going to become a Hindu Muslim issue since it applies to the entire population of UP. A state which is riddled with inefficiency, mal-administration and corruption at various levels along with regional goondaism, should concentrate more on administration and look at the numbers carefully of the declining growth in birth rate. The last time BJP won the state of UP was when demonetisation had just happened. Money with most of the political parties had not just been curtailed but evaporated. At that time, the major contenders BSP and SP left high and dry for any sort of gameplay during the elections. The situation continues till now and it seems that they have not recovered their money power. The pandemic has curtailed their land endeavours, which were largely responsible for party funds. Unless the BJP was to come to terms with the farmers of UP, there is little chance that they will be able to garner votes in the west UP, which are most crucial for winning the UP election.

Fashion during the pandemic

It's amazing how the pandemic has fared for Indian fashion industry. This industry was largely dependent upon exports to Europe and the US, who have drastically reduced their orders to India. During the complete lockdown a large chunk of these orders went to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The government further reduced or denied the export benefits under its various schemes for any garment exports. Fashions during the pandemic have changed. Economically as well as structurally. Pyjama parties, called less T-shirts and only functional lingerie are the call of the order. Those great cut suits and formals are not being replenished. Weddings have taken a backseat with the Lehengas coming out of the old drawers. Jewellery expenditure is limited to investments. Bollywood movies don't showcase anything new since they are not being released. So, one wonders what the pandemic fashion is all about. If it continues for a little more while, with commercial office space being restricted by orders from the national disaster act, the fashions have had that blow and the designers will have to reinvent themselves.

Can you travel?

The first thing that comes in any family's mind before making plans is to check the RT PCR test availability, applicability and feasibility. Further the burning question does remain, "Even if we are able to get out of the city will we be able to come back." That question is asked so many times to any travel agent and within the family that the plan goes phatt. Magazines and newspapers no longer issue places of interest and places for the next vacation.

Travel industry, hospitality and the associated services sector is on the brink of a disaster. Financially, orally as well as creatively. With the pandemic not getting over any time soon, the caution on travel shall remain for a long time to come and maybe the travel as we used to know if it has ended.

editor@womansera.com

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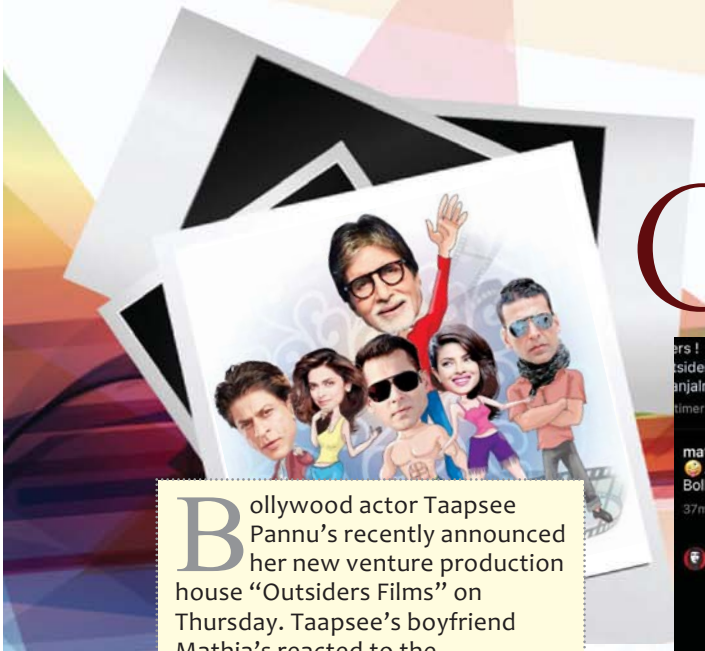
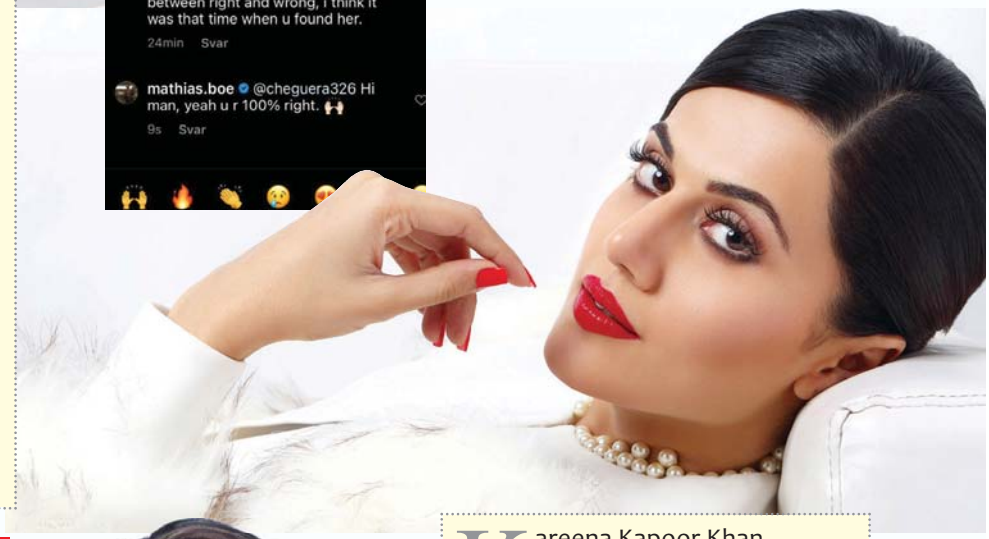


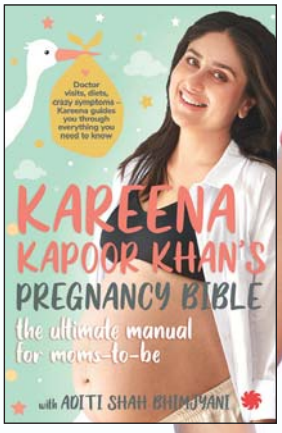
TaapseePannu's Boyfriend Mathias Boe Has A Befitting Reply To A Troll Asking "Why She's Dating Him", Check It Here

When u get trolled by a keyboard warrior, just agree with it
mathias.boe I'll do a movie for free . Hit like if u wanna see me in a Bollywood movie
37min 67 Synes godt om Svar
cheguera326 @mathias.boe i can't believe she is dating u man! She is so precious but doesn't matter how intelligent a girl is, there comes a time when she can't decide between right and wrong, i think it was that time when u found her.
24min Svar
mathias.boe @cheguera326 Hi man, yeah u r 100% right.
9s Svar

Bollywood actor Taapsee Pannu's recently announced her new venture production house "Outsiders Films" on Thursday. Taapsee's boyfriend Mathia's reacted to the announcement post and said he would do a movie free for her. He commented, "I will do a movie for free. Hit like if you want to see me in a Bollywood movie. The fan reacted to Mathias's comment and wrote, "I can't believe she is dating you man. She is so precious but it doesn't matter how intelligent a girl is, there comes a time when she can't decide between right and wrong. I think it was that time when you found her." Mathias gave a befitting reply to the troll and wrote, "Hi man, yes you are 100% right."



Kareena Kapoor Khan Recalls How She Didn't Know How To Clean Taimur Ali Khan's Poop, Says, "She Wasn't The Perfect Mom"



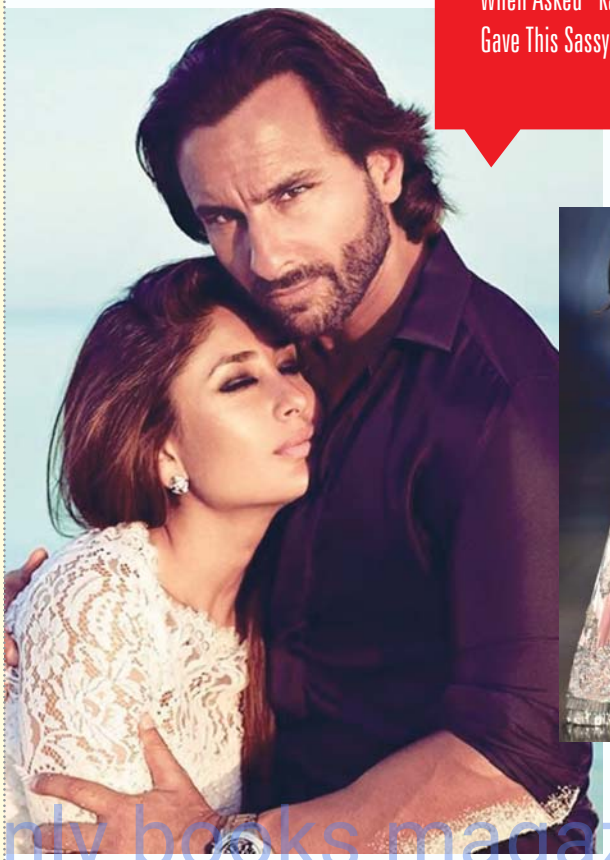
Kareena Kapoor Khan recently released the first look of her much-awaited pregnancy bible. She also made an announcement about its release and asked fans to pre-order her pregnancy book. According to a report in Hindustan Times, Kareena got candid about her motherhood journey in the book and revealed that she wasn't the most perfect mom initially and didn't know how to put a diaper on. The actress further went on to share the best rule to raise a baby is simple-to do her best and relax. She has written, "I wasn't the most perfect mom the first time around. I didn't know how to clean Taimur's poop or put on his diaper properly in the beginning. His pee leaked so often because his mother didn't secure his diaper perfectly."

FROM BOLLYWOOD...

When Asked "Kapoor or Khan", Kareena Gave This Sassy Reply To Fans.

Kareena Kapoor Khan is one such Bollywood actress whose style is really unique. Recently, a video of Kareena is becoming very viral on social media, in which she won everyone's heart by saying one thing. When Kareena reached a press conference after her marriage, she was asked by a reporter who would choose Kapoor or Khan, to which Kareena gave a very funny answer.

Bebo gave such a funny answer to the media reporter's question that her witty response won everyone's heart. The reporter said we have a question for you Kapoor or Khan. As soon as the reporter said this, Kareena responded by saying, "The problem is I can't choose anyone because I am Kareena Kapoor Khan. I consider myself very lucky to have this." Everyone was very happy to hear this answer of Kareena Kapoor Khan in a packed press conference and started clapping for her.



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'I Saw Separation.. Have Suffered A Lot', Arjit Singh Got Pain In First Marriage, Second Marriage Made Example For Society.

Falling in love with someone is special in itself, but if this love has to see separation then it becomes very sad. The love story of Bollywood singer Arijit Singh is also similar, where he not only welcomed love again with an open heart after the loss of his marriage but also gave a big message to society.

Actually, Arijit had first married his first reality show Fame Gurukul's co-contestant Rakhi Banerjee. However, this relationship broke down in a short time and both of them got divorced. During this, the singer was completely broken, whose pain was also visible in his songs. After this, he married his childhood friend Koel Roy, who was not aware of the people for many years.

Suniel Shetty says Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul 'A Good-looking Couple'

Suniel Shetty might be tight-lipped about his daughter, actor Athiya Shetty's relationship with cricketer KL Rahul. However, he confessed that they look 'brilliant' together. Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul have been long rumoured to be dating. While the couple hasn't confirmed the rumours, they have often dedicated social media posts to each other. Athiya and Rahul recently made headlines after fans believed that they were in England together. Now, in an interview with a leading daily, Suniel Shetty has confirmed that Athiya is indeed in the UK. However, he added that he was in the country with her brother Ahan Shetty. "Yes, she is in England, but she is with Ahan. The brother-sister duo has gone there for a holiday.

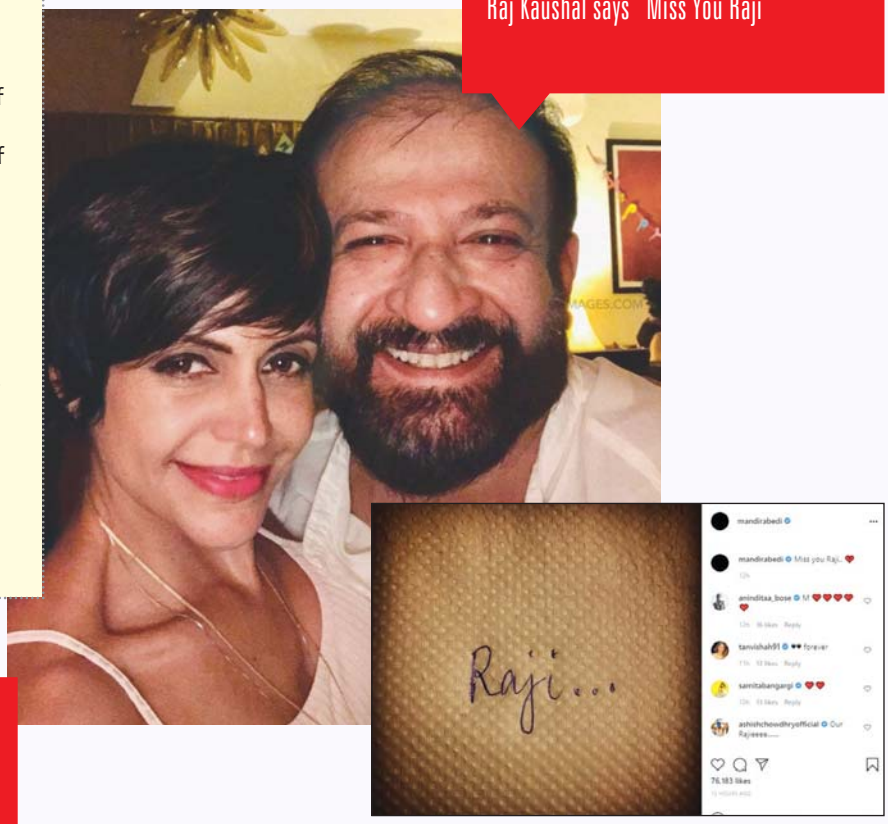
Taapsee Pannu Launches Her Production House Outsider Films

Actress TaapseePannu has launched her own production house called Outsiders Films, whose first project will be a thriller that she will feature in. Pannu has collaborated with a content creator and producer PranjalKhandhdiya who has worked on films such as Super 30, '83, Soorma, Piku, and is also producing Pannu's upcoming title Rashmi Rocket. With this, Pannu joins the list of young Bollywood actors producing their own films including Alia Bhatt, Anushka Sharma, Deepika Padukone etc.

MandiraBedi Writes Remembering Husband Raj Kaushal says "Miss You Raji"

Actress Mandira Bedi lost her husband and filmmaker Raj Kaushal to a massive cardiac arrest on June 30. The actress is mourning his sudden and shocking demise and has shared a post expressing her grief of missing him. . Raj Kaushal died due to a heart attack at the age of 49 on June 30. Mandira and Raj married in 1999.

Taking to Instagram, MandiraBedi shared a picture of a napkin with the word 'Raji…' written on it. She captioned the post, "Miss you Raji..," followed by a broken heart emoji. Reacting to the post, several celebs showered love on her. Actors Satyadeep Mishra, Arjun Bijlani and SamitaBangargi, singer Tanvi Shah and AdhunaBhabani also dropped red heart emojis.



Irrfan Khan's son Babil Khan, Asked About His Religion, says 'I am for all'

babil.i.k 1h
Brother are you a muslim ?
4m Reply Message
babil.i.k @sahil_insta69 I don't belong to any religion
32s Reply
babil.i.k @sahil_insta69 I am Babil.
19s Reply
I've read the Bible, Bhagvad Gita, Quran and I'm in the middle of reading Guru Granth Sahib. I am for all. How we help each other evolve is the basis of all religions.
Reply to babil.i.k...

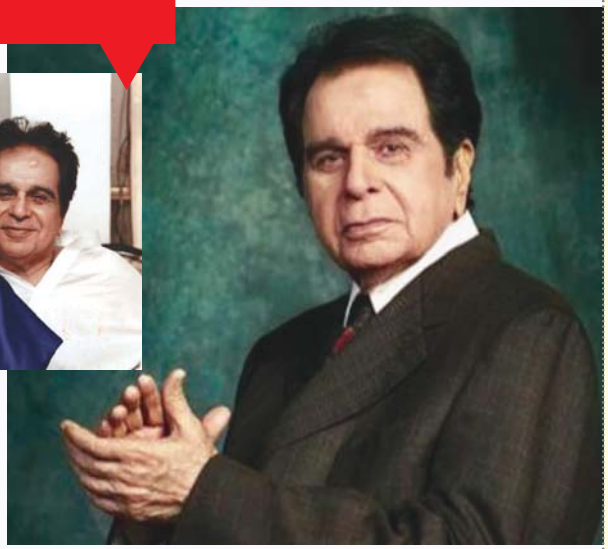
Babil Khan, the son of late actor Irrfan Khan, replied to an Instagram user who wanted to know about his religion. He said that he does not identify with any religion and is 'for all'. Taking to Instagram Stories, Irrfan Khan's son Babil Khan shared a screenshot of a comment, which asked, "Brother are you a muslim?" In his replies, he wrote, "@sahil_insta69 I don't belong to any religion," followed by, "@sahil_insta69 I am Babil."

Babil wrote on Instagram Stories that he is a 'human being' and did not want to be judged on the basis of his religion. "I don't want to be judged by my religion. I am not my religion, I am a human being, just like the rest of the population of India," he wrote

Sushmita Sen's Daughter Renee On Being Asked About Her 'Real Mother'

Renee Sen, the daughter of actor and former beauty queen Sushmita Sen, has spoken about being asked if she wants to know who her 'real mother' is. Sushmita adopted Renee and her sister, Alisah. Renee Sen made her acting debut with the short film Suttabaazi. She said in an interview that her 'big Bollywood debut' will happen soon. In an Ask Me Anything session on Instagram earlier this year, Renee, whom Sushmita adopted in 2000, was asked by a fan, "Do you know who is your real mother? Just want to know. Susmam is fab we all know." Replying to it, Renee wrote, "I am born to my mother's heart. This is as real as it gets." Sushmita had revealed in an earlier interview that when Renee turned 16, she offered to locate her biological parents.

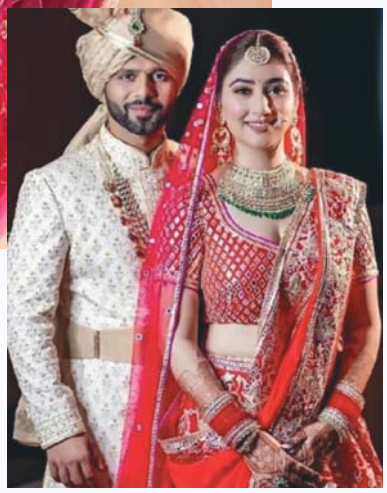
When Dilip Kumar said that he had 'No Regrets' about Being Childless



Actor Dilip Kumar died at the age of 98 on Wednesday. He is survived by his wife, Saira Banu. The couple didn't have any children, and in a 2012 interview with Hindustan Times, he'd spoken about not having any regrets about being childless.

Asked who will carry forward his legacy, Dilip Kumar said, "I already see so many actors eager to carry forward what I established in my time. When a bright young actor comes up to me and says, 'Sir, I wish to follow your work and walk the path you paved for us with your foresight,' I am filled with a sense of awe and gratitude to the Almighty for having taken me through the paces of finding my way in a profession I had no preparation to be in."

Rahul Vaidya And Disha Parmar Did A Romantic Dance, The Video Went Viral On Social Media



The wedding day of TV show 'Bigg Boss 14' fame Rahul Vaidya and his girlfriend and actress DishaParmar is getting closer and both are going to tying the knot tomorrow .Fans are eagerly waiting for photos and videos from the couple's pre-wedding ceremony to the upcoming wedding. Now it is a matter of happiness that the special rituals before the marriage of the couple have started. Rahul's name has been applied in Disha's hands. Meanwhile, a beautiful video of her is getting viral.

Actually, Rahul Vaidya has shared a video on his official social media account. In this, he is seen dancing with Disha. In this video, both are seen dancing on Shahrukh Khan's popular song 'Mehndi LagaKeRakna'. At the same time, fans are congratulating the couple for their coming life.

Priyanka Chopra shared childhood picture on her brother's birthday, difficult to recognize the actress.

Actress Priyanka Chopra has earned a lot of name in the country as well as abroad on the basis of her hard work.

In this picture, she is seen with her brother. But believe me, it will be very difficult for you to recognize her in this photo. Priyanka Chopra has shared two pictures on her Instagram account. In a picture, she is seen with her brother Siddharth Chopra. So in the second, her brother is seen with her mother Madhu Chopra.

Priyanka has very good bonding with her brother. Wishing her brother on his birthday, Priyanka wrote, 'Happy birthday Sid, lots of love. I wish I was there to celebrate your birthday. Wishing you happiness and joy.' Fans are congratulating Siddharth on his birthday by making a lot of comments on this picture.

A Liberation Bridge

BDSM is the key to sexual freedom?

By Mehak Walia

BDSM is 'a range of sexual preferences that generally relate to the enjoyment of physical control, psychological control, and/or pain.'

However, it is just so much more than that. BDSM has often been misunderstood, subsided, suppressed, darkened, neglected and even historically criminalized. This sexual need is still considered 'deviant' and an 'abnormal' sexual practice by our society for no apparent reason.

BDSM can be broken down into six rather interesting components: bondage and discipline, domination and submission, and sadism and masochism, and based on these, people further divide themselves into roles like 'dominant', 'submissive', 'switch' etc. These roles categorize their behaviour during the session i.e., whether they would take charge, let go or just switch between the two.

However, with COVID-19 crashing the party, the community has had to go through quite a shake up, which meant changes and big ones at that!

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BDSM During The Pandemic

The restrictions posed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected the BDSM lifestyle significantly.

The dynamic community, however, was quick to adapt and improvise in order to accommodate the situation. The curious and interested folks who found it hard to come out of the closet due to privacy concern, found the courage to explore and engage in the community, virtually and safely.

The community has also witnessed a growth spurt, as the general public has started experiencing an increase in sexual desire during the lockdown, and the urge to explore their sexualities.

Some stepping stones to BDSM like mutual masturbation, roleplaying as a form of foreplay, and reading erotic literature has now, paved the way to beat the monotony and boredom of vanilla sex. These have spiced up relationships and imbibed creativity into the sex life of at least 45% of the population. While some have gone AWOL from the community to deal with the pandemic, most others are doing their best to stay and hold the community together.

BDSM CAN MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE PARTNERS, IT CAN BE LITERALLY- ANYTHING YOU WANT IT TO BE. SOME STEPPING STONES TO BDSM LIKE MUTUAL MASTURBATION, ROLEPLAYING AS A FORM OF FOREPLAY AND READING EROTIC LITERATURE HAS NOW, PAVED THE WAY TO BEAT THE MONOTONY AND BOREDOM OF VANILLA SEX.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has undone years of work towards mental health and solidarity. Also, the last two years have also seen a great rise in the number of new people signing up, wanting to explore their sexualities beyond what the conventional vanilla world offers.

To address this and ensure a healthy, safe and aware community, some experienced members have taken to social media to talk about their kinks or about BDSM in general, with the help of podcasts, presentations and informative sessions open to people from various walks of life, who may be interested in dipping their toes into this pool.

Without holding back, these sessions cover multiple aspects of BDSM, including playing with safety, ensuring the newbies are included and made to feel a part of the community, to keep the predators away, and many more. Exploring one's sexuality can be a very personal and yet, enlightening experience and hence, to know what it may involve, is just as important.

What Is BDSM Really About?

BDSM can mean different things to different people. Based on the needs of the partners, it can be literally- anything you want it to be. You can choose to live the lifestyle with a set of heavy rules and restrictions of dos and don'ts or practice it once in a while to spice up things in the bedroom.

On the heavier side of BDSM lies an arsenal of ways you can learn, to heighten the act of pleasure between you and your partner. Most people imagine someone being whipped into a pool of blood when they hear the word BDSM being dropped in a conversation but, it is so much more than the act of sadism.

Different things or fetishes turn on different people, you could be into something as simple as blindfolds, to something as elaborate as paddles and pain play. In fact, the act of kneeling to your dominant partner and receiving affection can in itself be a very intense experience.

"One of the main reasons why people who indulge in BDSM as a lifestyle, don't go back is because of the various elements of powerplay. You have the luxury to break gender

norms and every other unnecessary rule, laid out by the society that puts you in their version of a convenient box. It is very natural and not at all surprising for a man to embrace submission. In the same way, a woman can make the conscious choice of donning an attire of her choice and being the Dominant counterpart in a relationship." said Josh, a long-term practitioner of kink who identifies himself as a Dominant.

BDSM is all about letting go and enjoying the feeling of losing or gaining control. It is also about making your partner feel safe in embracing their primal sexual needs, and finding satisfaction and solace in the same, with your support. This helps couples connect better and feel closer to each other.

You probably know by now, dominance and submission don't have to be expressed physically. You can make your partner do things for you just by playing the role of the 'Top'. BDSM is about control and obedience, and you can enjoy this type of sexual engagement without causing or enduring any pain whatsoever.

All you have to do is set the scene right and set some ground rules. Make them respect your authority, and you won't have to use force. Of course, a little bit of spanking is always fun.

Why has it been buried deep into the ground?

The true essence of BDSM lies in its groundwork i.e., consent, connection, appreciation, gratitude and a craving to learn more about oneself and our needs.

Alas, the taboo surrounding individuals embracing their sexual needs in India has been prevalent in most cultures since time immemorial. With puberty setting in as early as 12-13 years, understanding your sexuality can be an uphill task due to the amount of 'sexual repression' prevalent in our country.

As children, we are taught to never utter the word 'sex' because it's a 'wrong word' and the extreme lack of appropriate sexual health seminars makes it worse. We are conditioned in a way that we tend to believe that we must follow the rules and laws set by society.

"I felt sexually repressed while growing up especially because of my religion and social circles. Being an Indian Christian, masturbation and premarital sex are largely looked down upon, and sex education in school, as part of I was told to be careful of men as they only view women as sexual objects. I felt more guilty due to the sexual repression I faced as I was conflicted to explore myself." Commented Jennifer, a 21-year-old bisexual woman who identifies herself as a 'switch'.

Whether it is keeping sex hush-hush, following the traditional and binary concept of gender, or trying to fit into boxes to align with the concept of 'normal' created by society, we have all tried to jump through hoops to fit in, while growing up.

"Growing up in a moderately orthodox family, I wasn't allowed to explore my sexuality, even now nothing has changed. I was told ridiculous things like masturbation can cause TB. And anything even remotely sexual was not to be spoken about. When my teenage years started, I was given a really awkward lecture on how I should hide and control the lewd thoughts." Added Leviathan, a 21-year-old bi-curious man who identifies himself as a 'submissive'.

Similarly, BDSM as a concept has been pushed deep into the ground

BDSM IS ALL ABOUT LETTING GO AND ENJOYING THE FEELING OF LOSING OR GAINING CONTROL. IT IS ALSO ABOUT MAKING YOUR PARTNER FEEL SAFE IN EMBRACING THEIR PRIMAL SEXUAL NEEDS AND FINDING SATISFACTION AND SOLACE IN THE SAME, WITH YOUR SUPPORT. THIS HELPS COUPLES CONNECT BETTER AND FEEL CLOSER TO EACH OTHER.

as it chooses to break all the barriers of rules, shatter all the boxes that society chooses to push us in, and unapologetically explore what it means to be us, as individuals. After all, our needs, freedom, equality and happiness get sort of hard to digest for the uncles, aunties and the over-conditioned people around us, right?

"Back during my high school days, I discovered BDSM as a category in porn and it aroused me, unlike vanilla. Growing up in a traditional South Indian community, like all other boys, I was taught to respect and never harm others, especially women. When I mentioned my desire for dominance, my friends criticized and made me feel disgusted about it." Said Whacko, a 23-year-old male who identifies himself as a 'dominant'.

While the acceptance to want to explore these desires, itself doesn't come easy, it's like a treasure box with a lot of exciting tricks inside- once you decide to explore and open it, the beautiful feeling of 'sexual liberation' will be worth the effort.

"BDSM as a part of my life, has shaped me in many ways for the better. It has made me more empathetic and accepting of all others in the community. Participating in group chats has broadened my friend circle to a large demographic of age, geographical location and profession. It took me years to come to terms with my desires and accept them as normal but it was worth it." Exclaimed Whacko.

"BDSM CAN MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. HANDCUFFS, SEXUAL TORTURE AND BLINDFOLDS DO NOT HAVE TO BE EVERYONE'S CUP OF TEA- IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED. BDSM RELATIONSHIPS OR DYNAMICS CAN BE A BLEND OF TRADITIONAL SEX AND ROMANTICISM, ALONG WITH KINKS AND FETISHES TO FEED YOUR INNER ROMANTIC AND KINKSTER."

How to step out of these boxes and get over this repressive state?

The path of baby steps to walk out of repression begins with the acknowledgement that as an individual, you seek more than what is arbitrarily defined as 'normal' by society. After all, we must face the facts- sex isn't just normal, it's important! It is essential for you, for your relationships, for your emotional, mental and physical well-being and your life as a social being. Still, sometimes, we kind of lose its importance, we forget that it's not a want but a need.

The Youth's Perspective Matters

For far too long, sexual liberation in the context of our country, has been treated as a taboo because the idea of pleasure is viewed with guilt and shame. Drawing the limelight to this, talking about sexual liberation, especially from the youth's perspective, is essential to set things right. *"We live in the country of origin of the Kamasutra. It is undeniable that sexual health and knowledge was integral and not a taboo, the way it has been wrapped up in a veil of shame and thrown in the attic to collect dust and be forgotten about hopefully. Suppressing sexual identities and sexuality in the name of values needs to come to an end, as soon as possible."* Exclaimed Candace, a 25-year-old cis woman who identifies herself as a 'masochist'.

Goodbye To The Guilt

What we do is just add a hush-hush factor to it as we categorize it behind perverse, which adds sense of social stigma to it and adds up to our mental stress and guilt.

We must realize that everyone has their own sexual preferences or fetishes— for some, that involves extremely erotic practices like being tied up, handcuffed, reading erotica or otherwise being introduced to sexual torture and for the others, it can be just porn and masturbation.

"BDSM can mean different things to different people. Handcuffs, sexual torture and blindfolds do not have to be everyone's cup of tea- it all depends on the individual preferences of the people involved. BDSM relationships or dynamics can be a blend of traditional sex and romanticism, along with kinks and fetishes to feed your inner romantic along with the inner kinkster." Adds Janette, a 23-year-old pansexual female who identifies herself as a 'switch'.

Bridge The Gap

These fetishes and kinks which are a part of BDSM as a whole, can play a very big role when it comes to bridging the gap between an individual and sexual liberation.

They help us feel the innermost needs and desires that we hold to empower who we really are and wish to be. This helps individuals to have a rendezvous with their real selves as well as express what they really desire. Contrary to what one might think, BDSM is an age-old concept which has been helping people realise their fetishes and kinks, as well as feel free and let go.

Read About The Legacy

Ancient scriptures of the Kama Sutra teach *'the art of slapping/spanking a person, along with the technique of biting and gnawing to achieve a state of total pleasure and peace.'*

The scriptures also mention; *'Sometimes carried away by passion, a woman puts aside her natural temperament and acts the part of the man by slapping and beating him or play- fighting with him. She, at the height of excitement, becomes hard and fearless and dominates.'* This shows how old the concept of being a female dominant (domme) really goes. However, this concept was hidden away for centuries till books like 50 Shades of Grey and movies like 365 DNI decided to crawl down that hole and pull it out for the world to see and acknowledge.

SEXUAL LIBERATION IS ESSENTIALLY THE FREEDOM FROM THE SOCIAL STIGMA THAT HAD BEEN HOLDING YOU IN ITS DEEP, DARK AND AWFUL CLUTCHES. IF YOU HAVE MANAGED TO REACH HERE, CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO WHAT MILLIONS ONLY DREAM OF DOING SOMEDAY.

Learn About The Benefits

A lot of recent studies that were completely based on understanding BDSM, have reported that BDSM may offer several health benefits including relief from stress, better relationships, improved mental health, decreased anxiety, ease in social interactions and a more adventurous zeal towards life.

Leviathan comments, *"When I discovered BDSM, it just paved the way for me to explore myself, the more I read, the more I understood how normal it's for us to feel sexually excited, and this made me feel less weird about being sexually excited. It helped me get better at numerous things, the community I found was entirely new, hence, I pushed myself to socialize, and it got me a lot of friends, better communicative skills, and effectively expressing myself to the masses."*

He further added, *"I had a million ideas and not one good way to express them, I was always scared of external judgement, but that changed with my journey of kink. In a nutshell, it has made me a better person in various aspects of life."*

Work Towards Self-Realization and Acceptance

BDSM offers a release of sexual and emotional energy that some people cannot get from traditional 'vanilla' sex and that is why the connections formed based on consent, power dynamics and kink are stronger than most. The role of BDSM towards self-realization and accepting the sexual needs and fantasies of a person, work in many ways.

"BDSM definitely did help me a lot in life. It helped me accept my sexuality, made me want to try non-monogamous relationships sexually as well, and helped me define my limits and explore my needs at the same time. It also helped me grow and pull myself out of the guilt. It's because of kink that I can distinguish properly between an emotional and a sexual relationship, as I always thought one could never be possible without the other. It makes me feel

safe and empowered at the same time. Being a switch, I get to submit myself and also take control, which is truly magical. Kink for me, has been my sexual healing place." Exclaimed Jennifer.

The Most Essential Question: Is Sexual Liberation The Same For Everyone?

At its very crux, sexual liberation is essentially the freedom from the social stigma that had been holding you in its deep, dark and awful clutches. If you have managed to reach here, congratulations! You have been able to do what millions only dream of doing someday.

Once you are liberated, you learn to work towards self-acceptance, self-love, and self-actualization, and to live life with a new approach towards your identity, needs, desires and relationships.

Every person that has gone through this journey, from being in a box to being a sexually liberated individual through the bridge that we call BDSM, has been lucky enough to find their own definitions of what liberation means to them.

"My idea of sexual liberation is being respected and protected. Without these two, I can't ever trust anyone. Sexual liberation is sexual healing for me. It helped me get past my traumas, anxieties, insecurities and every other flaw I couldn't get over in the past. It's sacred yet sensual, and something that guards me and lets me have control over my life." Jennifer adds with a smile.

However, Leviathan proudly says, *"My idea of "sexual liberation" is "unrestricted", however, it could mean different things in different instances, but with one thing in common- me being myself. Be it in a "tied-up" state or a totally free state, I feel liberated when I'm being me."*

Meanwhile, Janette strongly believes that, *"Sexual liberation is a beautiful feeling. It's a feeling that you finally love yourself because you have explored who you want to be, appreciated your own needs as well as experienced your own desires. For me, it's a place that I have worked all my life to get to, so it means a lot for me to state the fact that 'I am a kinkster' and not regret saying it. It's bliss."*

On the other hand, Whacko adds, *"'Sexual Liberation' to me is accepting sexual preferences and sexual roles and desires that resonate with oneself. In addition, it is also the acceptance of others who do not hold the same perspective but choose to explore their sexual life in a safe and consensual manner and create a safe society without unnecessary judgement."*

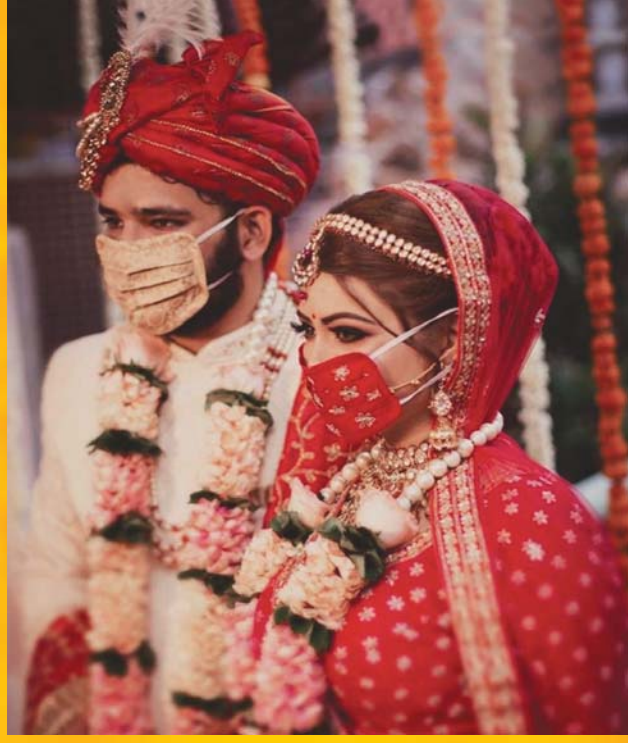
"Sexual liberation to me lies in the power dynamics of giving up control in the confines of the bedroom because that opens up a world of emotions to me. As a masochist, it puts me in a zone where everything else fades away, the noise, the judgement, and all that remains is my affection towards my partner and the emotions we feel in that moment, together." Exclaims Candace.

Even though the BDSM lifestyle has been misrepresented with pop culture in recent years, the lifestyle itself has been developed on the foundations of consent, trust and mutual respect for the partners involved.

This, along with a healthy dose of appreciation of the roles, values and sexual and personal identities that people evolve from, paves the way to a healthy and giving relationship, which makes it a very fulfilling experience.

Exploring one's sexuality along with emotional and physical fulfilment, and the promise of a strong mental connection that makes you feel empowered is what the BDSM lifestyle is all about. And what better way to embrace your own sexual liberation, than with a dash of desire. We

Bride, Groom And Corona



Marriages in the times of the pandemic.

By Mallika

Many people got married during the pandemic. Here a few ups to make the weddings at home fun:

Dress and decorate according to the ceremony

One could have various themes for various ceremonies of the wedding, to give it some diversity and to add fun and frolic to the wedding. The themes can be ceremony based, such as by emptying the living room, Decorating with yellow flowers, Adding a swing in the middle of the living room. Everyone can be dressed in various shades of yellow to have a perfect Haldi themed Haldi ceremony. Similar things can be done for Mehandi, where the deco-rating can be done in shades of green, along with few dances by close friends and family. This would add vibrancy to the ceremonies of the wedding.

Have combined ceremonies with the groom side

Combined ceremonies are fun. The bride and the groom get to experience all the ceremonies together, along with their close family and friends. This adds more fun to the wedding ceremonies. The couple can apply Haldi to each other, have amazing photos together, and spend more quality time together. Combined ceremonies have been witnessed a lot in weddings during the pandemic, as it helps in keeping the positivity and happiness alive in such difficult times.

Have terrace weddings to tie the knot under the stars

Couples can plan their wedding on the terraces of their houses or buildings. That would be a novel idea and would give a magical experience of having the wedding under the stars. The guest list being minimalistic due to the pandemic, would help in giving a good ambience to the terrace. The terrace could be decorated with fairy lights and flowers to give a magical touch to the ambience.

Pet lovers would have an opportunity for their pets

Pet lovers mostly had to leave their pets back at home, during their wedding as most of the marriage halls and gardens don't allow pets. However, this time your little fur ball can be with you while you tie the knot with the love of your life. This would allow you to have a holistic experience of having your furry ball of love and your partner, along with all your close friends and family, to make this experience a memorable one for the rest of your life.

PLANNING A WEDDING DURING THE PANDEMIC CAN SAVE THE MONEY WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN SPENT ON THE EXTRA GUESTS IT CAN BE USED FOR FUTURE INVESTMENTS BY THE COUPLE. SUCH AS INVESTING IN A NEW HOUSE, CAR OR BANKING SCHEMES.

You can spend more on honeymoons

Having a wedding during the pandemic could help you save some bucks. The budget can be used for personal enjoyment by the couple, such as planning a good and exotic honeymoon. This would allow them to experience a new place, where they have never been before, with the person they love.

Money saved can be used for future investments

Planning a wedding during the pandemic and saving the money which would have been spent on extra guests, can be used for future investments by the couple. These investments can prove to be very beneficial for the couple, such as investing in a new house, car or banking schemes. These investments might bring in more monetary gains for the couple, which they can use in future, whenever they are in need of some money.

Increase Your Child's Self-Esteem

And build confidence. By Unmana Dutta

Psychologists define self-esteem as the value addition we do to our own selves, for coping with daily life. It is the confidence we have in our own selves. By this, we often increase our self worth and build endurance, to lead a positive life. Simple statements repeated to oneself like "I am worthy of appreciation", "I am good at my work" enhances our positive emotions and gives a sense of fulfillment and triumph.

The amount of self-esteem one develops, is shaped by the environment and by the encouragement we get during childhood. So, children with high self-esteem would act independently, take responsibility for their actions, control their negative/positive emotions, attempt challenging tasks and would also be proud of themselves after accomplishing any task. However, those with low self-esteem would avoid public interactions, blame others for failures, feel unworthy of love and affection, would not be able to control their emotions and would choose a wrong way of expressing emotions.

To increase a child's self-esteem, parents need to do a few tasks, when their kids are in their early childhood and early teens. These things are mostly done through words, when parents talk to their children, and this in turn helps the children to develop their self-esteem.

Give substantial amount of appreciation

Children should be given ample amount of appreciation when they do something good. Even when they accomplish tasks like arranging their table, appreciate them by telling them that you are happy to see their effort. Through this, they feel encouraged to see the positive aspect of every act.

By appreciating their ability to arrange the table, you are encouraging their tidiness and neatness. When they display some quality, praise the positive trait in it by saying things like, "I like the way you solve your problems, even when the task at hand becomes difficult for you."

Teach positive statements to your child

Research suggests that depression is caused by negative self-talk and negative auto-suggestions one gives to oneself for any situation. Any kind of negative thought definitely gets manifested negatively in the life of the person. So, the children should be taught to give positive feedbacks to their own selves. They must be vocally taught about it.

Teach them to appreciate efforts, rather than the results. In case of their failure to win a match, tell them that they had given their best shot, or tell them that in any act, even if nobody noticed the good they have done, it is the kindness that matters.

Tell your child when you feel good about him/her

Most often, parents are very expressive about the negative feelings they have and talk very casually about how badly their child has performed. However, they do not express the positive aspects of their children.

When your child helps you in some task, appreciate the help. This actually helps the child to build positive self-esteem within oneself, as they 'replay the words' being told to them.

Avoid criticising your child

Sometimes, parents openly criticize their children for failure, and compare them with their siblings and other children. They may use direct statements like, "You were really bad at your performance on stage yesterday" or use satirical statements like, "Could you perform any worse than yesterday?" These statements are temporarily impacting the parents, but they have a deep-rooted psychological impact on the children.

TO INCREASE A CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM, PARENTS NEED TO DO A FEW TASKS, WHEN THEIR KIDS ARE IN THEIR EARLY TEENS. THESE THINGS ARE MOSTLY DONE THROUGH WORDS, WHEN THE PARENTS TALK TO THEIR CHILDREN, AND THIS WILL HELP THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN SELF-ESTEEM.

Encourage decision making

Leave small decisions for your children to take. Things like what they should wear should be decided by them from a very young age, where they should be given the opportunity to choose and pick clothes from the wardrobe. This makes them responsible for their choices and boosts their self-esteem when they make other life decisions.

A child with low self-esteem will never be able to build it in the later stages of his/her teenage years. So, it is of utmost importance that parents boost the self-esteem of kids in the early childhood days only, and work on developing the values that children hold about themselves. High self-esteem is important for the child so that he/she can build more positive relationships in life.

This helps them to accept disagreements and readily take up new challenges.

They accept the fact that it is okay to not know certain things, and that they do not need any kind of approval.

They also do not have the pressure of being perfect at the time. We

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Sonal Mittal, GM, Naturoville

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Founder and Designer of DV Fashion Studio
Model: Saanvi
Make-up: Gaytri
Photographer: Ramesh Sharma

Power of a 'thought'

Promises made in a hurry are seldom kept.

By I. M. Soni

Marcel Proust says, "It is always because of a state of mind which is not going to last that we make them. The very urgency of a condition that drives us to make resolutions is the same factor that will permit us to break the resolution at a future time when the conditions change." Promises made in haste are seldom kept – nagged by serious illness, or the fear of it, the unspoken line of many is: "Let me recover this time. I will never take chances with my health in future."

Similarly, when our misadventures are about to come home to roost, we secretly pray to escape resolving, in the heat of the moment, not to repeat them in future. Such resolves are writ in sands. They are honoured by breaking them.

The failure in resolves stems from our wrong approach. As Marcel Proust has pointed out it stems from a state of mind which in itself is temporary. As soon as the situation changes, we revert to our former mode of living, casting our resolves into the dustbin of discarded ideas. This goes on till another situation arises. We present ourselves with another well-meaning resolve which too ends in the debris of already broken ones.

Resolutions, to be effective, lasting, must be made at a time when no artificial or outside situation is affecting or judgment, when we are not being swayed by the guests of passing passions.

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These should be the result of cool deliberation, a combination of prudence and peace and principle.

An illustration will explain it better. Two friends, who had been addicted to the bottle for years, decided to call it a day. One succeeded in saying a farewell to it, the other faltered and after lukewarm bouts with his will-power, succumbed to the old habit.

The former's success of resolution could be traced to the lack of passing passion in his endeavour. He was not swayed by any outside influence nor was any particular situation goading him on. It was all a matter of his own deliberation!

He told me, "Over the years, the idea had been gathering strength in my mind." I often sat down in the seclusion of my room to talk to my conscience. I pondered over the various drawbacks and its attractions for me. I prepared an inventory of its minus and plus points. These minus points produced the right kind of motivation. And I said farewell.

BACK TO ROUTINE

The other one attempted to base his resolution on a situation which was unlikely to last. His wife had been unhappy with his flings with the bottle but she didn't create scenes. He went merrily on. Once, however, she burst and created a scene. The husband, stung into action, resolved to give it up. The real cause, however, was his wife's entry into the silent zone. The situation of non-communicability lasted several days. He did not touch it for those days. When their abnormal situation ended, he gradually drifted back into his old routine.

It should not be concluded that latter lacks will-power. The will comes to play its role later. The first essential is the concept if our concept is hastily conceived and adopted, is based on a pressure outside our real motivation, it will fail to click, it will be a fake product of a spurious mind.

It boils down to this: if not the right kind of motivation it will show in right results. We carry out our own dictates. Motivation is like seeds, mind the soil. As you sow, so shall you reap.

The application of the right motivation producing the desired results, and vice versa, is seen in every sphere of human-activity. A polio stricken girl falsifies the gloomy predictions of experts that she will never be able to walk. John Kennedy, his back broken, recovers to become one of the leading statesmen of the world. There is no supernaturalism in these astounding feats. It is the power of will. A.J. Boulfor says, "Mind moves the world."

People from all walks of life face failures, frustrations, and disappointments. Some get over them, others go under. The former become the salt of the earth, the latter washouts. The difference lies in their attitude. The former motivate themselves towards success and sunshine of life, the latter fall in love with their own misery, manufacture more of it and remain in the shadows of life.

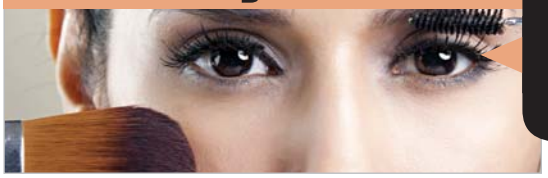
YOUR ATTITUDE MATTERS. IF CAUGHT IN A SELF-IMPOSED PRISON OF DEFEATISM IN A WEB OF TORMENTING, CRIPPLING DOUBTS, EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVES. YOU MIGHT BE STALLING YOUR OWN SUCCESS UNCONSCIOUSLY.

Your attitude matters. If caught in a self-imposed prison of defeatism in a web of tormenting, crippling doubts, examine your motives. Unconsciously, you might be stalling your own success. Sixteen or sixty, you feed the mind on right spirit and you will transform, magically.

There will be difficulties because your mind is used to a different kind of think-and-action pattern. It will block your resolves and cause your motivation to go on strikes. There will be temptation to return to your old life style. But stick on. Results will follow. Change begins with charge. All successful resolve begin with the generation of belief in the self. The magic words are: "I can." He can who thinks he can.

There is a magic in believing. The juggler begins by tossing two bails but ends by making them look four. You dismiss it saying: it is the sleight of the hand. This is besides the point. The important thing is he started by believing he could do it. He has done it, you believe it. Believe in yourself and before long you will change yourself for the better.

Beauty Queries



Q & A

MY TEETH ARE SLIGHTLY YELLOWISH ALTHOUGH I TAKE great care of them and getting brush these very well. Please tell me what the matter could be. I would love to have a dazzling smile with white sparkling teeth. I am a 16-year-old girl.

The color of teeth is, interestingly, inherited. Consider: do other members of the family also display yellowish teeth.

Another detail to know is that yellowish tinge on the teeth does not mean unclean or unhealthy teeth. Some people have white teeth and some yellowish. It is only when there are issues like bad breath, bleeding or spongy gums, for instance, that you need a dentist's help.

Cigarettes and coffee, cola, wine, etc., and even certain medicines can stain teeth. Sometimes, when the outer enamel is thin, the inner dentin which is brownish in color could be visible through the outer layer, giving teeth a tinge. Enamel wears out and thins with age. So, do check with your dentist too.

A professional teeth cleaning by a dentist can remove tartar and plaque from your mouth, giving you whiter teeth.

Brush your teeth with a pinch of boric acid sprinkled on the brush to remove dirt and grime. Do not do this more than once or twice a week as this could thin the enamel coating considerably after prolonged use.

Rub teeth with lemon juice and salt vigorously over teeth and gums. Leave on for two minutes and then rinse thoroughly with water.

There are teeth whitening toothpastes of reputed companies too which are pretty good at giving you sparkling teeth.

●

I AM A TEENAGER AND USE NO MAKE-UP AT ALL. My mother says I am too young for this; that foundation, mascara, etc., will spoil the skin. I have a smooth, clear complexion and do not really want to look painted. What should I do for some special occasion?

Your mother is, indeed, right. Heavy make-up and other cosmetics can ruin the natural beauty of the teenage years. However, a light moisturizer during the day, and a thin layer of night cream applied at bed time will ensure that your skin retains its suppleness for the years to come. When going out in the sun, a little lotion with SPF will counteract the drying and tanning effects of the sun.

For special occasions, use eyeliner to highlight your eyes. A gentle layer of pink or peach-colored lipstick too will brighten your face. A tinted lip balm too can be substituted for the lipstick. A gentle moisturizer can add a glow to your face. Avoid all other heavy make-up which can spoil the natural beauty of your face.

I HAVE SOME WHITE HAIR ON MY EYELASHES AND THESE LOOKS rather ugly. Please tell me how to deal with these.

In some people, lashes turn grey with the advancing years. You have not mentioned your age, but if you are above 50, this could be the cause. Vitiligo or leukoderma, albinism, blepharitis, etc., to cause lashes and brows to whiten. Primarily, there is a loss of pigment in that area. It is advisable you consult a good skin specialist to ascertain the main reason for your condition.

Do not use hair dye or color to make the lashes dark as you could damage the delicate tissues of your eyes. Use an eyebrow pencil or kajal stick to blacken the errant lash hairs. Eyeliners too can be used on the waterline carefully to camouflage the problem area.

●

IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN MAKE MY HAIR FRESH AND FRAGRANT when I have to go on a sudden date. Usually, I do not have time to even wash and blow-dry it. Please advise. I am a 21-year-old girl.

Yes, of course, there are some simple methods of freshening up hair in a short time. You can use dry shampoo following the instructions on the pack. You just have to apply on hair and brush it well, preferably by flicking hair upside down. No washing or wetting hair. And your hair becomes clean and fresh.

There are special hair perfumes in the market now which promise to make your hair smell heavenly. Simply spritz it on your hair, brush and run it through hair to remove oiliness, sebum residue and sweat.

You can even mix your regular perfume with a little hair serum or moisturizing hair cream and brush it in hair to give you a sleek, clean, fragrant mane.

●

COULD YOU PLEASE HELP MY FRIEND AND ME TO CHOOSE earrings? We want to get these ornaments to wear at a college party next month. My friend has a round face and mine is long and rectangular. Please advise.

You are correct in realizing that different face shapes need different kinds of ear ornaments. Your friend's round face will look good in studs which suit all face types. But to give the roundness a bit of length, earrings which hang down, or chandelier types will look great.

You should avoid long earrings as these will give the illusion of more length, but opt for ear studs and winged earrings which will "lift" your face. You can even use a gold chain to tuck into your hair from the ear ornament to look fabulous.

Readers are invited to send their beauty problems and questions regarding face, complexion, hair, skin, eyes, etc to this column.
Address your letters, written legibly or typed on white paper, to:
WOMAN'S ERA E-3, Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110 055.

Looking for a sporty, party wear outfit? Your son will shine like a rockstar in this stylish ensemble.

Comfortable Fashion

Your son will be at the center of every one's attention in these amazing summer outfits.

A perfect blend of style and comfort, this outfit is made of pure, authentic fabrics, designed to make your child feel happy and energetic.

Beat the summer heat with this casual, breezy, yet trendy outfit.

Who said pink is only for girls? Make your son a trend setter with this comfortable, yet chic outfit.

Tashkent, Capital, Uzbekistan

Its parks and gardens. By D.B.N. Murthy

Indians remember Tashkent for its association with our late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who had signed the Tashkent declaration with Pakistan ending the Indo-Pak war in 1965. Unfortunately, Shastri died an untimely death while still in Tashkent on 11 January 1966, the very next day after signing the historic agreement with Pakistan President Ayub Khan. Of late, more Indian visitors, both in groups and in smaller numbers are visiting this ancient country that has so much to offer for visitors.

A direct 3.5-hour flight connects Tashkent with New Delhi by their national carrier Uzbekistan Airlines that operates every day with modern aircraft. Due to flight delays I could land in Tashkent at a convenient time which made it easier to get a taxi to the city, with unfortunately, the usual haggling for fixing the rate. My small B&B was located conveniently near a metro station. Tashkent boasts of a three-line metro system quite efficient and some stations are nicely decorated. A few of them have chandeliers and some have artwork but one cannot compare with the Russian metro stations. Trains are punctual, fast and reliable. But the rides don't come cheap. One has to buy plastic coins from the metro station counters. There is no 'smart card' that could be used like in most of the metro station networks elsewhere. The signs at the stations are mostly in Uzbek language that poses a challenge to visitors. But people are friendly and helpful and guide the visitor to the right platform. Another problem faced by elders and handicapped persons is that there are very few escalators leading to the station platform. That means one has to climb up or climb

IT WAS EASY REACHING THE NEAREST METRO STATION TO HOTEL UZBEKISTAN, A MULTI-STORYED STARRED HOTEL IN THE SHAPE OF AN ARC THAT IS A LANDMARK OF THE CITY. IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL, I COULD SPOT THE RED BUS STANDING. I GOT INTO THE TOUR BUS PAID $10, NOT $20 AS I HAD PRESUMED.

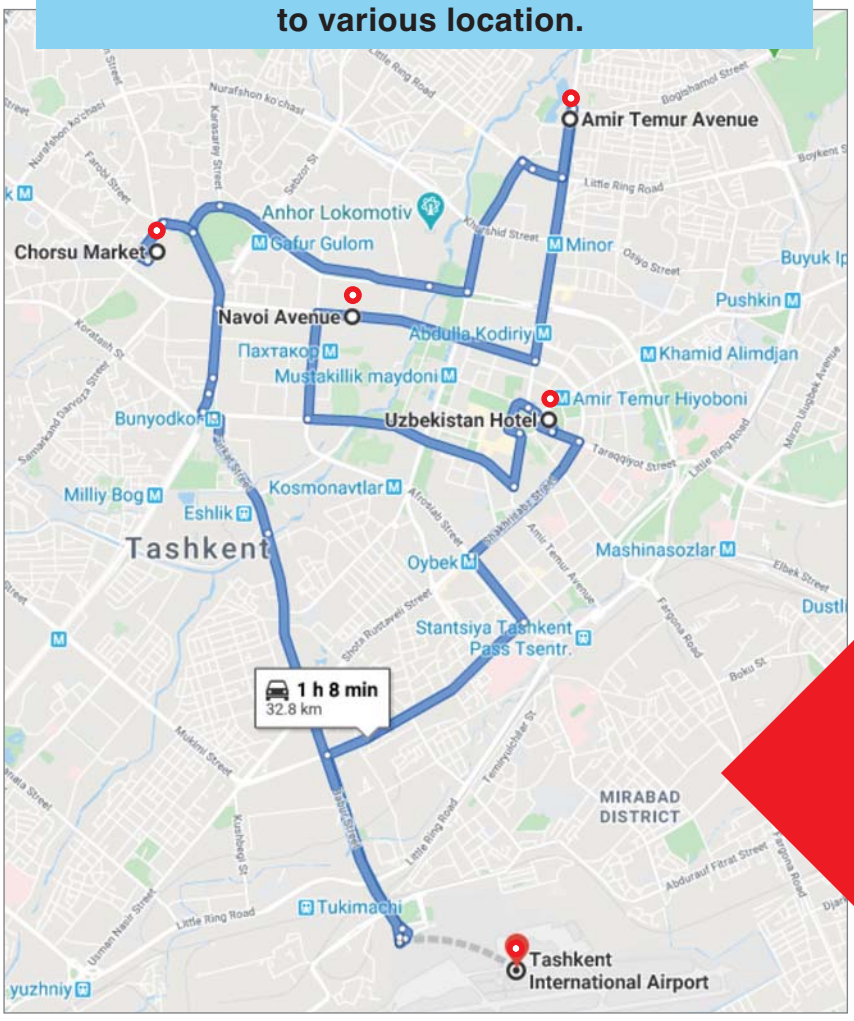
down a flight of steps to access the platform.

The local currency is Soms which is about 8300 Soms to the US dollar. Very few coins are in use while notes of various denominations are used in trade and commerce for daily needs. A few banks and ATMs do exist in the city. But money exchange is only at a few banks which have elaborate procedure for exchanging currency.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY

It was quite hot during the day and so I walked from the hotel to a nearby grocery shop after sunset for purchases. I decided to venture out and take the city tour bus that would give me an introduction to the city. It was easy reaching the nearest metro station to Hotel Uzbekistan, a multi-storyed starred hotel in the shape of an arc that is a landmark of the city. In front of the hotel, I could spot the red bus standing. I got into the tour bus paid $10, not $20 as I had presumed. I went to the upper deck to get a better view of the passing scene. Unfortunately, English speaking channel was not operational that gave me a better chance on seeing rather than getting distracted by a

Route map from Tashkent International Airport to various location.



commentary. There were only a few visitors on board, including Uzbek citizens too. We passed by tree-lined avenues, parks and a few water fountains en route. The sight of a few beautiful monuments bore testimony to the early city planners. The tall TV tower is a landmark on the skyline. The first halt was at the memorial to the fallen citizens during the brutal rule of Stalin who had control over not only Russia but those countries under his influence. The next halt was near a beautiful mosque, with its big round top, in front of which was a water fountain. It had a well-maintained garden as an added attraction.

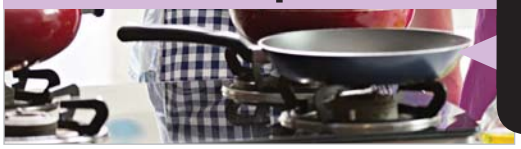
TASHKENT EXPEDITION

With a metro it was easy to find the way. I visited the Hotel Uzbekistan and in front is Amir Taimur Park with a big statue of Taimur on horse-back. It has nice walk paths, benches to sit and an attractive water fountain. An underground passage makes it easy for pedestrians to cross the street above. I had planned to attend a classical folk performance at the Navoi National Theatre. The entry ticket was not too costly. Fortunately, there was a show on a weekday too. The programme was a concert by 'Tador', a group of performers. The theatre inside was impressive. Though my seat was in the balcony, I had a grandstand view of the proceedings. The programme began at 6 .15 pm to lively music that was recorded, mostly of string instruments and drums. There was no voice but announcements about episodes. There were many episodes depicting different stories. There was rarely a solo performance but mostly groups of up to 22 members at one time on the stage. Each episode ended to thunderous applause from the audience. Women and men, young and old, were the performers with their colourful folk dresses. Women had heads covered or with caps. The lively performance went on beyond 90 minutes and for me I had to get back to my hotel late at night. So, I decided to walk out silently. No taxi was available on the deserted streets at that hour. Fortunately, the landmark of Hotel Uzbekistan was seen near by which was a metro station. I visited the Chorsu Bazaar, the biggest in Tashkent. It consists of numerous small shops selling all kinds of stuff from ready - made clothes to dried fruits. It is near a metro station. My five-day stay at the small hotel Jahongir B&B was comfortable and enjoyable. It was a family-run hotel with various members of the family pitching in to help. The separate dining room was quiet and the food was good. The small garden with a few flowering plants was a place to sit, relax and enjoy, being away from the main traffic, it was a quiet and peaceful place. It was close to a few groceries shops and the nearest metro station Tinchilk was a mere 10 minutes away by walk. The weather was pleasant except in the afternoon when it tended to be warm.

Tips

- Flight: Uzbekistan Airlines has a direct 3.5-hour flight from Delhi to Tashkent.
- Hotels and B&B as per budget, to be booked in advance using website.
- Best time to visit April to October
- Budget modest. Local transport, metro in Tashkent and taxis in another cities and towns.
- Train bookings in advance using website or through a travel agent.
- Get e-visa in advance using their website or though a travel agent, valid for one month stay.
- Local currency Som, mostly paper notes, but US$ are accepted at hotels.
- Language, Uzbek and Russian. English is understood and spoken by a few persons, including hotel staff.
- Mostly non-vegetarian food. Fruits, cakes, yoghurt, ice-cream and soft drinks available at shopping outlets.
- For sightseeing use a local taxi arranged through the hotel. The taxi driver could act as guide too.

Kitchen queries Q&A



NOW AGAIN SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE NEVER heard, is said to be very good for our well being- the Moringa leaves. Please tell us more about it.

Moringa oleifera is a fast growing, drought- resistant tree of the family moringaceae. Other common names in this family are drumstick tree, horseradish tree and ben oil tree. Moringa has many important vitamins and minerals. The leaves have 7 times more Vitamin C than oranges and 15 times more potassium than bananas. It also has calcium, protein, iron and amino acids which help in healing the body. It is packed with antioxidants and is also good for the digestive system. So, one should consider making moringa leaves a part of their diet.

●

MOST OF US ARE SWITCHING TO HOME-COOKED MEALS AMID this pandemic. So it is a bit worrying to see the extra food ending up in the refrigerator. So please suggest some healthy ways to use this extra food.

This is a serious problem for all of us as we cannot afford to even think of wasting food in these difficult times. So with a little bit of imagination we can make the best use of leftover food. Rice: can be used in a number of interesting ways, like making fried rice and lemon, tamarind, tomato or curd rice. You can even make rice cakes. Dal: can be used for soup, rasam, savouries and even tasty paranthas. Pasta: just chop and toss it with basil and chilli flakes to make a pasta salad. Paneer: kadhai paneer, paneer makhani or paneer bhurji can be used as toppings for pizza or filling for wraps. Chapati: can be made into a burrito with sweet, spicy and tangy fillings of cooked rajma, chole or even chicken.

●

HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN THE NATURAL CRUNCHINESS OF VEGETABLES while cooking?

It happens very often that vegetables such as capsicum, carrot, cauliflower or onion lose their natural, crunchy texture and get soggy while being cooked. However, if we keep certain points in mind this can be avoided. When cooking such vegetables, make sure you have a large wok or pan with hot oil, in which the vegetables should be tossed. Salt in these recipes, should be added at the end. This will give the vegetable a nice crunch on the outside and they be cooked well without breakage. Also remember, not to use a spoon to mix, instead toss lightly and carefully.

●

WHY IS UTTARAKHAND CUISINE SIMPLY FIT FOR GODS?

The abundance of herbs, therapeutic spices, wild fruits and vegetables, makes Uttarakhand food one of the healthiest cuisines. Organic ingredients directly from the kitchen gardens, makes the food rich in antioxidants. The limited use of spices helps retain the natural flavours of the food. The cooking techniques are also simple, food is either braised or boiled, rather than being fried on a desi chulha, bhatti or gober gas. Moreover, mountains provide different ingredients in different seasons, thereby giving vivid flavours to the inhabitants. Winter is famous for dry products while spring brings plenty of fresh vegetables. These simple meals are paired with tangy chutneys.

●

WHAT'S THE FRUIT "BEAUTY WITH BRAINS"? PLEASE TELL US MORE about it.

Commonly known as Dragon Fruit and rechristened "Kamalam" by the Gujarat government in recent times, is the amazing fruit, with brains. This unusual fruit is of two types, red and yellow. It is a treasure trove of vitamin C. It's vibrant magenta exterior and pointed scales have earned it the name dragon fruit. It's flavour is mildly sweet and resembles a hybrid of kiwi, watermelon and pear. The fruit can be used for starters, desserts, salads, sorbets, ice lollies, chuskis or granitas flavoured with honey, smoothies and even in savoury dishes. It is also known as pity, pitahaya and strawberry pear.

●

IT IS SAID THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PREDICTABLE PLATE. HOW DO WE JUSTIFY THE STATEMENT?

"We eat with our eyes". This is very true. For the success of a dish, food presentation is just as essential as its taste and flavour. Every plate is a piece of art that is created with imagination and creativity. To begin with, choose aesthetic plates with unusual sizes and shapes. Keep in mind that every plate should include large and small items, as well as soft and crunchy foods. Food plating requires a high level of skill and patience. Sauce can be drizzled with squeeze bottles, to complement any design or colour. Beautiful garnishes add of colour and enhance the presentation. So remember, cooking tasty dishes is not enough, the presentation matters even more, because we do eat with our eyes.

●

WE ALL LOVE MOMOS, BUT IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE VEGAN MOMOS at home and that too without a steamer?

The dough for the momos is vegan, so no problem with that. Now just make sure that the filling only contains vegetables, soy, sesame, ginger and garlic. As for the steamer problem, you will have to improvise a bit- take a pan , brush some oil on it and place the prepared momos on it. Add a little water and cover the pan. So, it is steamed and pan-fried at the same time. You just need a nice, non-stick pan with a lid and your momos will be ready without a steamer.

— SAVITA BHARGAVA

If you have any problem in cooking or kitchen, write to *Woman's Era*. We shall try to help you sort it out.
Address your queries to:
WOMAN'S ERA, E-3, Jhandewala Estate, Rani Jhansi Marg, New Delhi-110 055. Click womansera.com to lodge your queries.

Get Glamorous *Bridal Make-up!*

Make your bride-look just like a falling angel.

Step 1

Apply the eye base for the eye make-up.

Apply light golden eyeshadow on the lid & using light brown eyeshadow in the crease line and blend properly.

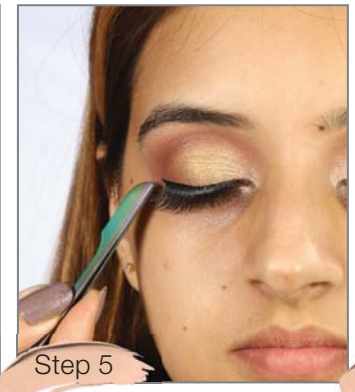
Step 2

Step 3

Apply the eyeliner.

Step 4

Apply eyelashes.



Step 5

Set up the eyelashes.

Step 6

Use orange corrector under the eyes, around the nose and around the mouth.

Step 7

Use high-definition foundation all over the base.

Step 8

Contouring.

Highlight points.

Use blue liner on water line.

Apply coral colour blush.

Define the Eyebrows.

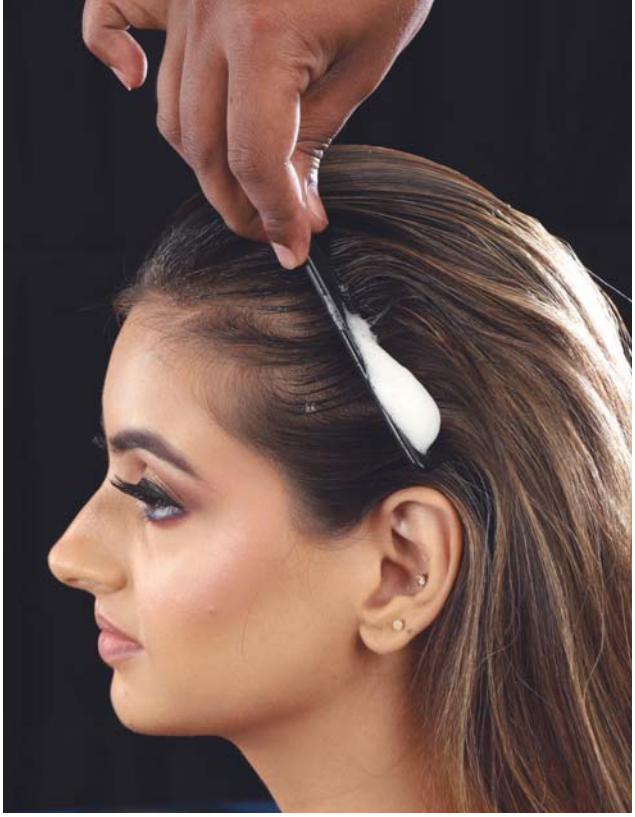
Apply Mascara.

Shape the lips with lip pencil.

All set with glamorous bridal-look.

Your Best *Hair Affair!*

A perfect hairstyle to add on your bridal-look.



1
Apply moose for volume.

2
Blow dry the crown area.

3
Blow dry the back area.

4
Set-up the rollers.

5
Use two roller to curl in front.

6

Use curler rod for curling the hair.

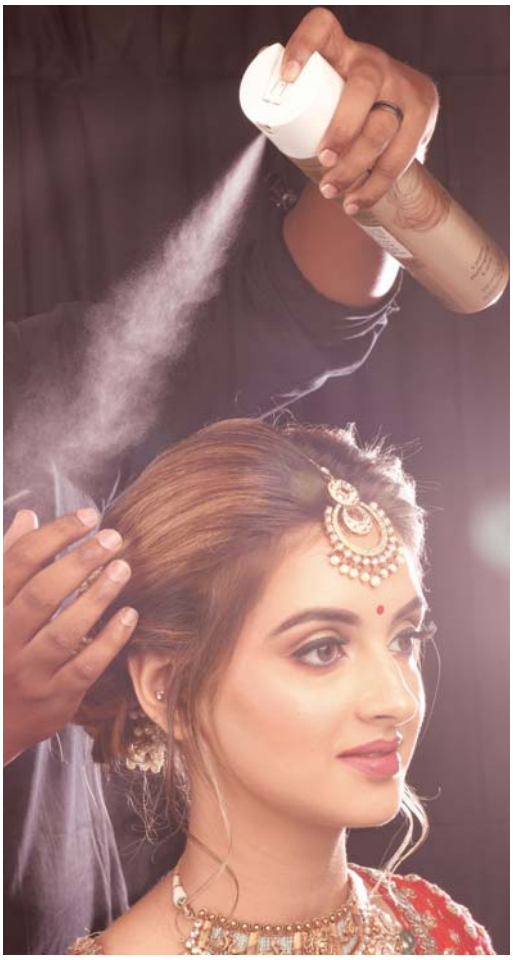
7

Give soft curls in front.

8

Use hair accessory on the messy bun.

Flaunt your bridal hairstlyle, princess!



9

Last hair spray for setting up the hair.

Makeup: Divya Jaitly
Hairstyling: Robin Kumar
Outfit: Aakarshan BTQ & Queens Pitampura
Jewellery: Aalishan diamonds & jewellers d mall, pitampura
Muse: Vaibhavi Kohli
Mehndi Artist: Mukesh Mehendi Art

How Vsisters Handled Lockdown Conditions in a Positive Way

Vsisters active participation throughout the lockdown. By Dr. Veena Adige

Vsisters is a ten year old all women organization of Navi Mumbai having about seventy members from the GSB community. It is a very active group, firmly believing that every person have some special talent need to be discovered. They organise contests, picnics, talks, demos, games, social work, dramas, skits and many other programs.

An average of six to seven programs are held every year. Summer fun, Monsoon masti, Diwali dhamaka, picnic, mini mela, republic day, Vasant panchami are held with the most awaited and favoured annual program in march being the best to attend with families.

Vsisters had organised their ninth annual function on March 22, 2020, the day lockdown all over India was announced. Upset and scared, they cancelled it. When the lockdown conditions continued and all had to remain at home all the time Vsisters decided to do something about it. There was no point in getting tense and worried. So They decided to do something different, to keep the members interested and active. They organized on line contests and other programs.

Though some of the members were not aware with online and zoom, they learnt it from their children and grandchildren and mastered in it. Within few days they were quite proficient in attending the zoom sessions.

ACTIVITIES DURING LOCKDOWN

It began on May 5, 2020 when the first contest-a fancy dress was announced. Within a couple of days many fantastic entries came in. Sant Tukaram, Shirdi Sai Baba, sabjiwali, woman power, witch, queen and others rubbed shoulders with children participants who also joined as Vishnu, Kings, actresses, construction engineers and the like. There were so many enthusiastic entries that the more contests were organized which were overwhelmingly participated by the Vsisters. They had discovered a novel way of keeping them busy and excited (other groups also followed their lead later on and now almost everyone is doing some or the other thing online.)

IT WAS NOT ONLY CONTESTS BUT EVEN GROUP BHAJAN SINGING, GROUP CHANTING, GROUP DISCUSSION PROGRAMS WERE ALSO HELD.

SOMETIMES ZOOM MEETINGS WERE ORGANIZED JUST TO SEE AND SMILE AT EACH OTHER, BRINGING EVERYONE CLOSER.

Singing contest have also participants from all over the world (for this contest extended family members were also included). Cooking, Shringar, hairstyle, table settings, pooja, jewellery, drawings, craft and many other contests were held over the year.

And all had such good performance that the judges found it difficult to decide the winners. The judges were VIPs from the community who were from outside Navi Mumbai and are experts in their respective fields.

It was not only contests but even group bhajan singing, group chanting, group discussion programs were also held. Sometimes zoom meetings were organized just to see and smile at each other, bringing everyone closer.

'We all enjoyed and did not know how the days passed because of these activities' say Savitha H Nayak, Sudha kamath, Savitha Joshy, Durga Shenoy, Anjani Pai, Veena Shenoy, Rohini Kudva and other members.

With the first wave receding, Vsisters celebrated their tenth anniversary on March 6, 2021 under controlled conditions, as following the pandemic rules.

And with the second wave on the brink of receding and with all members getting the jabs, Vsisters hope and pray that they will able to continue their activities soon. They have a lot of activities line up, waiting to get executed. We

Short Story

Palpable Allegiance

A mid religious probs. By Enakshi J

The sight of the red paan stains was obnoxious. And the sun seemed eager on sucking out all my energy and draining me completely.

Present-day Lucknow (near the bus-stand)

A bright yellow bus screamed to a stop a few feet in front of where I paced, 'Horn ok please' was scrawled in silver across its back. Everyone beside me on the crowded railway station sidewalk stared.

Tum to thehre pardesi, sath kya nibhaoge was playing at full volume. I could smell the *tunday kabab* in the air. A fat, ugly looking passenger shouted impatiently through the open passenger window, *Bhaiya, ek Lucknavi paan lagao, supaari daal ke*. (Make a Lucknavi with supaari)." The sudden attention of curious people was diverted towards this man. Untouched by the limelight that he was getting, he flushed out the leftovers from his previous *paan*, and spat on the road. The sight of the red *paan* stains was obnoxious. And the sun seemed eager on sucking out all my energy and draining me completely. I scurried through and waited under an iron shade for a

A few days after this peaceful dinner, her father received a call from Lahore and the news left him distraught. His sister-in-law had passed away leaving behind her twin new-born sons, under the care of her husband, Rehman.

rickshaw. Lucknow had not changed even a bit. It was all the same – the same smell, the same type of people and the same heat. It felt homely yet the feeling of terror engulfed my whole body again.

Present-day Lucknow (Sadar Bazaar)

"Sitara, come for dinner," screamed Mrs Edriz. Realising that the milk had boiled enough, she rushed into the kitchen to turn off the gas. Sivaiyaan was ready for her lovely daughter. Smelling the aroma in the house, Usmaan Edriz, Mrs Edriz's husband, was also forced to put his law book down and get ready for dinner. He loved what his wife cooked and could not wait any longer. The whole family ate heartily, unaware of the conspiracies of the world, unaware of the diplomacy that people had now developed.

Sitara was eight years old. She was bright yet coy. Her world was limited to her father and her mother. She loved being with them. But destiny had other plans for her. A few days after this peaceful dinner, her father received a call from Lahore and the news left him distraught. His sister-in-law had passed away leaving behind her twin new-born sons, under the care of her husband, Rehman. Sitara's mother and father had to leave for Lahore immediately but taking Sitara with them was not feasible because the family thread had the knots of Hindu-Muslim rivalry. Therefore, the couple decided to leave Sitara under the care of Naaz *phuphi.*

Two days later, the crowd had bats in their belfries. There were fires and gunshots. People killed people. Even children were not spared. The roads had the blotches of blood and the scene could terrify anyone. Fighting for religion, these people had probably forgotten the one common religion, humanity.

All this began three days before when the sound of five gunshots in the Sadar Bazaar took everyone by surprise. Before people could react to the situation, a large crowd of people wearing white *topis* and white *kurta pyjamas* came running towards the main entrance of the market. Their long and thick beards and kohl in the eyes classified them as Muslims. Where one of them had a long wooden mashaal in his hand, the other young teen had a half broken whiskey bottle. They charged like a pack of wild dogs. No sooner did they reach the gate of the small Hanuman Temple, than they started throwing the glass and the fire balls at the shops on the top floor.

There was total chaos and people started running for their lives like bats out of hell. No one was stoppable. Whoever tried to stop them, sacrificed his life. Women tried to hide inside the house but the fireballs and glass brought the whole house down. The air smelt of blood and gunpowder. The smoke emitted after firing the gunshot veiled the area. Nothing was visible clearly. Smoke, dust, revenge and hatred were all that one could sense. The attack, however, stopped. Was it the police? No. Was it the exhaustion of ammunition? Or was it the absence of anyone alive? Nobody knew the answer. With time, the streets became clearer but going in that area again would give anybody heebie jeebies. Police, as usual, came late and all they could do was declare curfew in that area. They did not allow anyone to pass through.

Oblivious to all this chaos, Sitara was enjoying her stay with her *phuphi*. Why would she fear anything? The happy news was that her parents had reached Lahore safely and were busy performing the last rites of the deceased.

Before people could react to the situation, a large crowd of people wearing white topis and white kurta pyjamas came running towards the main entrance of the market. Their long and thick beards and kohl in the eyes classified them as Muslims.

The next two days were peaceful. With no people on the streets and the market closed, it seemed as if Lucknow lost its glory and life. But was it the end to everything? No. As soon as the sun's rays started fading, the Hindus came out in the open to execute their plan and avenge the deaths of their loved ones. Even if some had not lost anyone, the feeling of patriotism towards their religion, gave them courage to come out and fight. They came up with better and more assured means of destruction. They used Molotov cocktails (incendiary weapons) to transform the nicely built shops into ash. The Saraffa Bazaar was in ruins. Dense smoke covered the entire region. People died again; this time Muslims were the victims.

I was deployed in the Saraffa Bazaar zone. My regiment consisted of soldiers from different castes and creeds. We never knew this until we were sent to a real scenario where people killed people for religion. We reached Lucknow the next day (after the second attack was over). I had already been there many times with my family. But then I was a child. Now the situation was entirely different. Still I could sense the homely environment. The delicious smell of *tunday kababs* filled my nose and my taste buds started to get excited. But I had to keep that thought aside and focus on the mission that was supposed to be accomplished.

The people were on a killing spree and stopping them was a tough task. After the failed attempt by the police force, the BSF was deployed and we were asked to take over the situation. The streets and localities near the railway station were calm and peaceful; people could be seen walking up and down the road, unaffected by the happenings in their city. But as we moved further inside, the atmosphere became gloomy and dark. Even the

rays of the ebullient sun did not seem to penetrate the layer of atmosphere. There were creatures that feed on the dead. The rotten smell of the dead corpses and the bloodshed, made us remember what we had read about the Jallianwala massacre. And the worst part was that the reason was still unknown. Had the reason been clear, it would have been easier to put an end to what was started. But some said that a Hindu shot a Muslim while some said the opposite of this. How the spark ignited the whole city was not known to anyone.

The moment we reached our destination, we were asked to disembark from the truck and take positions because our head was informed that a famous group of people was heading in our direction. Whether they were coming to fight us or coming to surrender, we did not know because of the lack of communication.

"Shiva," called another man in uniform, asking me to pass the walkie-talkie. The group was there. Their looks were deceptive. Dressed in white, they waved a white flag and signalled to speak to our chief. Moments later, we were asked to back off, for the people had informed about the attack scheduled in another area. Jumping back into our trucks, we got ready with our ammunitions and guards. The whole evening was spent fighting with the beastly humans and saving the lives of innocent people. The Sadar Bazaar looked like a blood lake. People killed mercilessly and we, too, were a part of that massacre. It was only at about 11 pm when the attackers retraced their path back home and some of them even surrendered.

Deeply wounded by their strident actions, our chief ordered us to check for any victims in the houses that had been brought down by the fire.

I walked past the *surma* shop and made my way up the stairs. As I entered a leeway, I saw a small brown door. I wanted to skip that room assuming that the fire would not have left anyone alive, but my sceptical heart made me do otherwise. With one strong kick, I sent the door flying. I could feel the flames on my skin. There was nobody in sight. Just when I decided to turn back, I heard suppressed sobs. I bent to check under the bed and found a little girl there. The horrified look on her face said it all. But, however much I tried, she denied leaving her spot. It was only after much thought that I decided to look around. A burnt hand was sprawled across the kitchen floor. A closer look confirmed that the person was dead and the little girl was too stunned to move because of that.

I pulled her out and took her downstairs. I tried to comfort her and made sure that she felt safe. But how could she? With a pool of blood around her and no one beside her, she had lost all hopes. She was sent to the medical room the same night. After talking to her for some time, the doctor told me.

I pulled her out and took her downstairs. I tried to comfort her and made sure that she felt safe. But how could she? With a pool of blood around her and no one beside her, she had lost all hopes. She was sent to the medical room the same night.

After talking to her for some time, the doctor told me that her name was Sitara and that her parents had gone to Lahore. The person who had died in the same house was her *phuphi*. I could empathise with little Sitara as she reminded me of my young days. I had lost my parents in such riots. And it was difficult for me to live with that.

Present-day Lucknow (BSF headquarters)

"Shiva, are you listening?" shouted another man in uniform, breaking my reverie and bringing me back to the stark reality. We were deployed in Lucknow, yet again because of Hindu-Muslim Rriots. I could not help but think of Sitara. I was not as prepared as I was five years back. After finding Sitara on that fateful day, I realised the trauma that little child would have gone through.

For days, we could not connect with her parents. But when we did, the far-off happiness on Sitara's face was something that left the deepest impact on my heart. She was happy yet scared to even go to her parents. The playful child had then become quieter. She had succumbed to the fear and atrocity of the humans.

In these five years, I had trained hard like all other soldiers but soon I realised that I was weak at the knees to fight this battle again. The anticipation level was at its peak. What if after the fight I find another child sobbing for his or her parents? What if the parents are dead?

The mere thought of innocent victims made me shiver. I never understood why my parents were killed. I never questioned about that. But somewhere I felt that those answers could make my hurdles disappear.

The siren blew and we were asked to board the truck that was supposed to take us to the same Sadar Bazaar. With no words in my mouth, I followed the orders. The saying that 'soldiers are never scared' seemed like a myth. I was scared. I was doubtful yet I had a duty to fulfil. We

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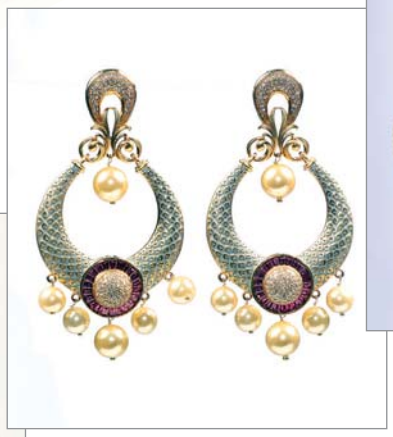

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We All Can do it!

Creating Balance in Work & Motherhood. By K. Nalini

Indian Constitution in 1950 officially granted women and men suffrage. Unlike in the West, Indian women participated in voting, ran for public offices and political parties. Women have held posts as President, Prime Minister in India as well as Chief Ministers of various states. Indian voters have elected women to various State Legislative Assemblies and National Parliament for many decades. Women are trying to find solutions to major issues like violence against women and children, sexual violence, discrimination, child marriage, illiteracy etc. Today, economic independence has added to their confidence.

More women in India must join the workforce. Today only 25% of Indian women are employed according to the World Bank's 2017 India Development Report. India ranked 120 among 131 countries on Female Workforce participation. As per the Report of the Consulting Firm of Deloitte on the subject of 'Empowering Girls and Women in India' women in labour force fell from 36.7% in 2006 to 25% in 2018.

Though India is a democratic nation with good legal reforms that support women, the participation of women in the economy and society is not doing well. Whether in the Corporate sector, entrepreneurship or political leadership women are lagging behind men.

What challenges do women face? What holds them back from participating in the workforce? Motherhood, gender bias, unequal pay, security, mental and physical harassment, lack of proper family support, insufficient maternity leave are some of the major issues and challenges that working women face today.

Child Care Issues

Balancing work and motherhood are not always easy but it can be beyond fulfilling to have the best of both the worlds. The concept of work life - balance for working mothers is a challenge. Women have to get used to their "New Normal," as working mothers.

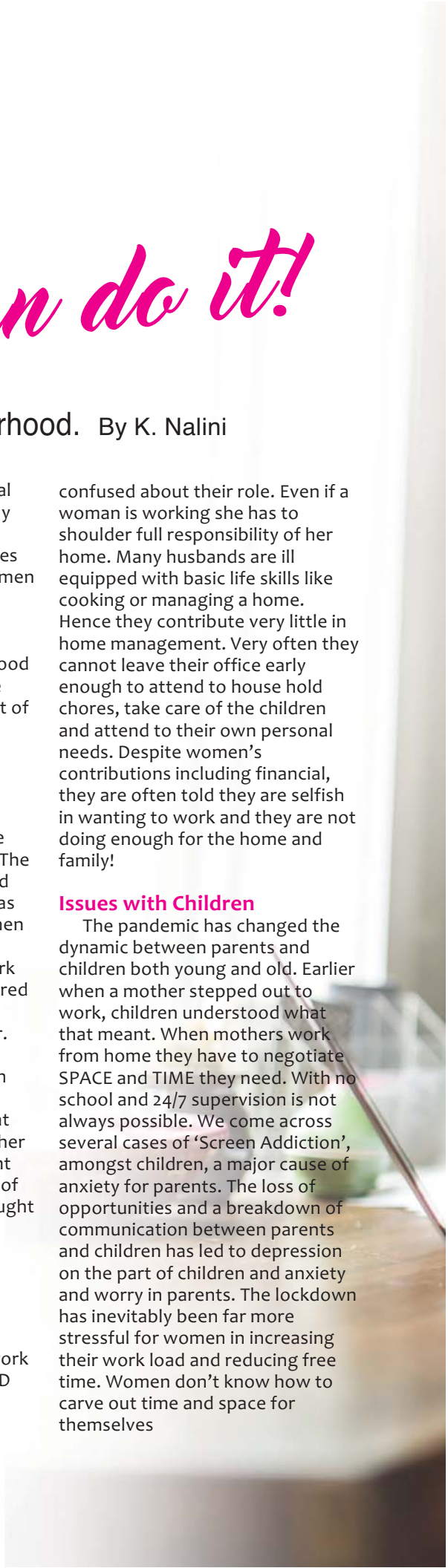
Many women drop out of the workforce after their first child. The main problem is inadequate Child Care facilities. A recent survey has shown that 90% of working women thought of quitting their jobs because of child care issues. Work places are not supportive or geared to allow working mothers more freedom and flexibility. When Dr. Kalpana, a Hematopathologist reported late for work as her son was bleeding due to a fall in the staircase, her boss remarked that she was more concerned about her children than her career! A recent survey of 'Times Job' found 90% of women but only 10% of men thought of quitting their jobs because of child care issues.

Domestic & Care Work

The bulk of domestic work is done by the mother. And it is unpaid. Women do household work for 353 minutes daily as per OECD data. They are forced to stay at home. Women themselves are confused about their role. Even if a woman is working she has to shoulder full responsibility of her home. Many husbands are ill equipped with basic life skills like cooking or managing a home. Hence they contribute very little in home management. Very often they cannot leave their office early enough to attend to house hold chores, take care of the children and attend to their own personal needs. Despite women's contributions including financial, they are often told they are selfish in wanting to work and they are not doing enough for the home and family!

Issues with Children

The pandemic has changed the dynamic between parents and children both young and old. Earlier when a mother stepped out to work, children understood what that meant. When mothers work from home they have to negotiate SPACE and TIME they need. With no school and 24/7 supervision is not always possible. We come across several cases of 'Screen Addiction', amongst children, a major cause of anxiety for parents. The loss of opportunities and a breakdown of communication between parents and children has led to depression on the part of children and anxiety and worry in parents. The lockdown has inevitably been far more stressful for women in increasing their work load and reducing free time. Women don't know how to carve out time and space for themselves



Cultural & Personal Factors

Years of patriarchy has resulted in women themselves have biases and mindsets which act as challenges. 40% of both women and men believe that a woman whose husband is earning well, should not take up a job even though they are qualified. Many women voluntarily opt to stay at home since they believe that this is their primary role and responsibility as mothers. While travelling in the train from Delhi to Hyderabad I met Kumuda, my co-traveller. Her five. year old son, Raghu was clinging to his mother and would not let her out of his sight. She narrated how the maid who was supposed to take care of Raghu would put him inside the wardrobe and go out with her boyfriend. Kumuda gave up her highly paid job and was full of remorse.

THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN BOTH YOUNG AND OLD. EARLIER WHEN A MOTHER STEPPED OUT TO WORK, CHILDREN UNDERSTOOD WHAT THAT MEANT. WHEN MOTHERS WORK FROM HOME THEY HAVE TO NEGOTIATE SPACE AND TIME THEY NEED. WITH NO SCHOOL AND 24/7 SUPERVISION IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE

Sexual Harassment

Women who go to work face many challenges. Sexual harassment is a perpetual threat. Data from the Ministry of Women & Child Development states that sexual harassment of women has increased by 54% from 2014 to 2017. Despite establishment of POSH councils, women do not feel safe at work place.

Gender Bias

Gender bias is so prevalent at work place. Nurses and teachers are easily accepted as their jobs are "nurturing." If a female is an engineer or a doctor for example, she has to struggle to prove that she is as good, if not better at the hardcore job. These biases also reflect in the 'Gender pay Gap'. Women get paid less than men for the same job because they are considered 'less efficient.' According to "The Future is HERE" survey report, 42% of women said that they faced "Managerial Bias." 23% of the women said that there are different performance standards and expectations set for male and female employees working at the same level. Women are reluctant to open up about the challenges they face at work. Any decision related to their work gets associated with marriage or pregnancy or child care because of which women are often deprived of promotion.

Work- Life Balance During COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020 the Covid virus hit the world and shook the very foundation of our lives. Working from home became the norm with remote collaboration and digital operations being what a day's work entailed. This led to the merging of work and home life under the same roof.

Companies are now mindful of how their employees work-life balance will pan out. Many mothers long to return to their offices and working the way they did before the pandemic. To them office is a conducive place for creative thoughts, fresh perspectives where ideas are exchanged and translated to projects and strategies put into action. Companies can provide 'Day Care' facilities for the employees' children.

But REMOTE WORK is helping some mothers as it reduces commute time and travelling expenses as well as the likelihood of exposure to the virus. It is also helping moms to 'restart' their careers. Becoming a mother is the greatest gift of a woman's life. But it can soon turn to regret if the expectant mother has to leave her dream career behind. Today remote working from home has opened new avenues not only for business houses but also for 'New' mothers. They won't have to leave their dream job for entering in to the phase of motherhood! They can enjoy motherhood while staying financially independent.

WOMEN WHO GO TO WORK FACE MANY CHALLENGES. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A PERPETUAL THREAT. DATA FROM THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT STATES THAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN HAS INCREASED BY 54% FROM 2014 TO 2017. DESPITE ESTABLISHMENT OF POSH COUNCILS, WOMEN DO NOT FEEL SAFE AT WORK PLACE.

Challenges faced by Working Women due to COVID-19 Pandemic

According to Assocham Survey that was conducted on 2800 working women aged between 32 - 58 years from 120 companies across 11 sectors of the economy in 10 cities showed 3 out of 4 working women in India suffer from chronic or acute ailments due to pressure from trying to balance personal and professional lives. The survey findings released ahead of International Women's Day on March 8th, reveals that 42% of working women suffer from life style diseases like back ache, obesity, depression, diabetes hypertension and heart ailments. This is because working women have to double up as valued employees at their workplace and home makers after office hours.

Working from home mandates, during COVID is impacting the mental health of women employees especially. Most women have been working for more than a year from home. This 'extended' work from home has affected the mental health of t many employees, On the one hand, a study conducted in

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December 2020, 26% of Indian working professionals reported an increase in 'productivity'. But it came at the cost of one's emotional wellbeing. 'Comfort zone' is defined as a behavioural space where you follow a 'set routine'. It provides you with security and reduces mental anxiety. A Harvard Business Report asserts that interaction with other employees is missing when you work from home. In some organizations working from home decreased performance. Both productivity and employee morale diminished.

The COVID pandemic has been hard on everyone. But the data shows women have been disproportionately affected given the increase in 'family and child care' responsibilities. This has resulted in high levels of physical burn out, mental fatigue and even loss of economic security for some. Many women felt that working from home should not mean an 'always-on' environment with no clear boundary of switching off from work.

Additional challenges for mothers working from home are how to navigate the dynamics of new VIRTUAL working environment, how to make your presence felt virtually, how to network, how to build one's visibility among several others. Work and Social strain increases women's risk of Coronary heart disease by 21% as per the findings of the Journal of the American Heart Association. In one study, women were more likely than men to document emotional and physical symptoms, including exhaustion and depression. The COVOD-19 pandemic has highlighted on going stress of women, in balancing paid work and social responsibilities. These poor health outcomes are the result of combined effect of stress of work and stress at home.

Can Women Balance Work and Motherhood?

Yes, they can. If we want to improve the economy of our country there should be equal participation of men and women in work. A 2018 Mc Kinsey report says increasing women's participation at work by 10% can lead to an increase of $770 billion in our GDP. If we want economic prosperity and social justice for all, changes have to happen at an individual, social and institutional level.

Remote Set Up: Mothers are far better than husbands when it comes to 'Multitasking'. Women who re-enter the workforce to be the best kind of people because they are so efficient, so organized that companies can depend on them. Working from home should be more 'Goal Oriented' and should be kinder to mothers. Companies should have Full Time, Part Time or Freelance Remote talents to get quality work done and pay accordingly.

Workplace Equality: To maintain work-life balance women need a healthy workplace which is all 'INCLUSIVE' and is based on MERIT and CAPABILITIES. It should take in to account women's rights along with people from different races, ethnicity and religion. Workplace needs to create fair and equal opportunities for all. Diversity and inclusiveness are important. It is also a matter of Social -justice and social responsibility. Companies should keep as norm 'flexible remote work' so that returning mothers can keep contributing to the growth of their company. At workplace genuine talent is not defined by GENDER or MOTHERHOOD.

My Family, My Friends and Me... Q&A

I am a 30-year-old Indian woman living at presently in America. My husband too, is here with me. We have been married for a year and we have no children.

Ours was something between a love marriage and an arranged one. We were introduced to each other by our parents, but we were attracted to each other immediately. We began to go out together and then, to the delight of both sets of parents, we decided to get married.

Our parents were particularly happy because the match was also a convenient one – I and my husband wants marry and I get posted in the same city in the USA and were home on leave!

But once the high of the wedding was over and I came to America with my husband, it didn't take long for me to realize that our match isn't one that has been made in heaven. For one thing, my husband and his parents had exaggerated his qualifications, position and salary and the truth was that he was far less qualified than I was and his income was much less than mine. But I was less bothered by this than the fact that he had lied to me.

However, my husband was contrite and, rather reluctantly, I decided to give him another chance. But over the next few months I realized that he was a congenital liar, a heavy drinker and also a womanizer. So, I decided to apply for a divorce and be free of him.

My husband said bitterly that he hadn't expected this from an "Indian woman". I wasn't at all affected by what he said, but then he told me something else that he had hidden from me. This was that he had lost his job three months earlier and that if I divorced him, he would have no option but to return to India. He then begged me to let him live with her for the present.

I agreed to let him live with me for a few weeks till he got a job as I knew how difficult it is for Indians in the US. But it is now three months and he is still living with me and is behaving as if it is my duty to support him.

Surprisingly, I feel a certain guilt in refusing to support him. Perhaps there is a bit of love left for him in my heart too. What should I do?

The question is how much love is there in your heart for this man who really appears to be quite a scoundrel? And anyway, you have only mentioned love towards the end of story! Till now you have only seemed to be disgusted with the man and eager to get rid of him.

But the ways of love are difficult to understand!

However, you should now decide how much you love this man and how much you are ready to put up with for his sake. Do you have dreams of him reforming and the two of you living together happily ever after? Well, this is possible but, given what you have said about the man and his lies, it is rather unlikely.

You haven't got much out of your marriage till now. Ask yourself if you shouldn't just cut your losses, get rid of this man and start your life afresh.

●

I am a 20-year-old college student. I come from a very conservative family and have led an extremely protected life till now. In fact, it is only after I entered college that I have moved freely with even classmates.

I became very friendly with one boy whom I drew as my partner in performing some experiments and soon we began to meet during our free periods and our lunch break. Our closeness then grew and we both admitted to the other that this closeness had been transformed into love.

Then one day this boy asked me to stay after the last period as he had something to tell me. I did this and after most students had left, he took me to a lonely part of the campus. There he told me some horrifying news. He told me that he had been diagnosed with cancer and told by the doctor that he had only a few months to live!

He broke down when he told me this and I began to cry too. We then held each other close and sobbed – and before I knew it, my clothes were off and we were making love! As we lay in each other's arms later, we wept again and I told him that I wanted to bear his child before he died.

I could not sleep the whole of that night and I went to college the next day eager to see my boyfriend. But even as I entered the gates of the college, I realized that people were looking at me and laughing. Then my class girls surrounded me and took me into our common room and told me that that boy had been boasting about having fooled me and having had sex with me.

I came home at once and haven't gone to college since that day. Now I want to kill myself because my life is ruined. The only thing that stops me is that I don't want to break my parents' heart. Is there any way I can make my suicide look like an accident?

Why on earth should you think of killing yourself? Your fault is only that you were gullible and emotional and did not know that someone who was your class-mate, could, not only stoop to such depths for the sake of sex, but also be cheap enough to boast about his "achievement" later. It is this young man and not you who should hang himself for this shameful act.

So, hold your head high and go to college. Let immature girls and boys' gossip about you and laugh at you behind your back. There will surely be others who feel that that young man has done something despicable and so will befriend you and ostracize him. If you have the courage, you can go to a female staff member you trust and tell her what happened. She can then advise you on whether you should complain to the dean or principal about this obnoxious young man and his acts.

Not Your Fault!

Psychological impacts of cheating partner. By Mallika Chugh

Cheating is the most soul crushing experience for any person in their lives. They lose hope and start finding faults within themselves as to why their partner decided to cheat on them. Some of the major impacts are:

Body image complexes

Many, at times, start developing body image complexes. People tend to get an inferiority complex that they don't look attractive in the eyes of their partner and that could have been one of the most significant reasons for their partner to cheat on them. However, that's not the case. You look perfect in your skin as it is always said that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. Body image complexes would simply make you feel bad about yourself and that is going to create emotional turmoil for you.

Loss of love

People experience loss of love as the person whom they feel closest to, ditches them for someone else. They feel abandoned and heartbroken. The best way to overcome this feeling is to start nurturing oneself and devote completely to self-care. Self-love is the best kind of love as it always stays there with oneself.

Insecurity and anxieties

It is natural to have anxieties and insecurities when someone has cheated on you however, do not allow them to over power you. You are a strong person with a strong moral base who has stayed faithful to their partner in the entire relationship however, it was them who could not hold their head straight and let you down. There is nothing for you to feel insecure or anxious about.

Development of narcissism

People who have experienced being cheated an by their partners, might turn into narcissists themselves. They may start to believe that this is the way life is, however, that is not true and you should remain the simple person you have always been.

Your partner did not deserve a person who was loyal to them and loved them with their whole heart.

YOU ARE A STRONG PERSON WITH A STRONG MORAL BASE WHO HAS STAYED FAITHFUL TO THEIR PARTNER IN THE ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP HOWEVER, IT WAS THEM WHO COULD NOT HOLD THEIR HEAD STRAIGHT AND LET YOU DOWN. THERE IS NOTHING FOR YOU TO FEEL INSECURE OR ANXIOUS ABOUT.

It is their behavior that has been disturbing.

Allowing yourself to become narcissistic would extract all the flavors of emotions from your life and leave you dull like your partner who cannot experience even a Beautiful emotion as love.

Low self-love and reduced self-worth

It is terrible to have a partner cheat on you. However, it had nothing to do with you that they cheated. It was their distorted thinking to take you for granted. So, don't allow this experience to lower your love or self-worth. You are still the great and attractive person that you have always been and loving yourself would enhance your positive attitude towards life even more.

May lead on to be cheats as well

Never follow the footsteps of your cheating partner. They were no idols. Many times people themselves become cheats in order to overcome the feeling of remorse and unhappiness in their relationships.

However, that is only going to add onto your emotional turmoil. If the relationship is becoming too toxic for you, leave it but don't become like the person who was once the reason for your pain. You would not want to be the reason for anyone else's pain. We

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Of The Aging Parents

An urge to care. By Rajshekhar Pant

And finally we had to bring him to the nursing home, where he had earlier been operated upon around eight years back for the replacement of both his femur balls consecutively. Down with extremely high fever, above 105 degree that could be brought down with Nice tablets alone preceded with prolonged icing, he was suffering from extreme debility. Even for sitting on his haunches he needed the support (something that he literally abhorred and would be the last person ever to accept) of two persons to lift his once robust torso. His left leg swollen exceptionally with red blotches and blisters all over was noticed by us only when the fever came under control.

Despite the apprehension of our brother in law, a most dependable physician- that he should immediately be taken for a test of DVT (deep venal thrombosis) we all, without discussing the fallouts of DVT, were suggesting it to ourselves that the possibility of it being some infection, some allergy that has flared up was rather more pronounced. "Isn't it that he is obdurate enough to ignore the concern and repeated entreaties of all of us not to exert himself beyond a limit and give up his I will do it myself attitude? ...He would often have swollen legs or palm when he wakes up in the morning. Did he ever listen to our request to give up his routine rounds of the lawn and de-weed the fuchsia or cyclamen pots; or to visit the self-made statue of Shirdi Sai Baba right at the entrance and the open shrine of Shiva at the opposite end? What they refer to as Ostrich syndrome i.e. closing your eyes to a perceptible threat simply because you don't have the courage to face it may best highlight the mental state we were in.

Seven days did elapse since we admitted him in the hospital. In the meanwhile the expert opinion of physicians, surgeons and physiotherapists were being taken. Taking him out for certain tests of course was suggestive that something was serious. However, the positive approach of our doctor and the visible reduction of the swelling kept us consoled and did not let our hidden apprehension strike deep roots.

A LATE-EVE CALL

On the tenth day of our stay in the hospital the Doctor, a good old family friend as he is, did call me quite late in the evening to his chamber. By then he had already completed his evening round and was sitting quite idly in his room. "Pantji", he said in a grave voice, "had you not been known to me for such a long period of time I would never have taken this case to

OF COURSE THE COMMON FEAR THAT WE ALL HAD WITHOUT LETTING IT SURFACE UP OSTENSIBLY, WAS CONDITIONING ALL OF US FOR THE POSSIBLE EVENTUALITY. BY WAY OF ASSURING EACH OTHER WE ALL WERE PROBABLY REASSURING OURSELVES.... OH! NOTHING WILL HAPPEN.

hand... You know babuji's case was that of severe septicemia... and at the age of ninety seven it could have been fatal... Suddenly I understood why he had been calling surgeons and yet another veteran physician so repeatedly and why Pappa was suddenly sent to an advanced pathological lab. The doctor kept on chatting with me for more than an hour- more like a philosopher, a well wisher and an emotional son who had already lost both his parents, than as a medical professional. "Take extra care of him, do pay due attention to his wishes and have more trust on God than on any doctor", was his parting message.

Walking back to room-number three in the first floor I was reminded of the lingering look that Pappa, while seated on the wheel chair was being carried to the car park for a drive to the hospital, had over his roses in bloom, camellias, and other flowers along with the statues he had sculpted decades back in our garden. .. Was he getting thanatophobic then... and how about all of us? Of course the common fear that we all had without letting it surface up ostensibly, was conditioning all of us for the possible eventuality. By way of assuring each other we all were probably reassuring ourselves.... Oh! nothing will happen; it is just common infection; he will shortly be back home. And back home he was following about a fortnight of hospitalisation.

Leading Fashion and Glamour Photographer

Sharat Chandra is a fashion and glamour photographer and film producer from Mumbai. He has shot many fashion brands and editorials. He has developed an individual style that's artistic and glamorous. He is known for his unconventional lighting and angles.

Cover Picture was shot by Sharat Chandra fashion Photographer Kasturi Rout has elegantly posed in this picture . The outfit has been designed by Sujata & Sanjay Mumbai.

Contact details: 9820056198
Instagram: @Sharatchandraphotography
Email: sharat.nomad@gmail.com

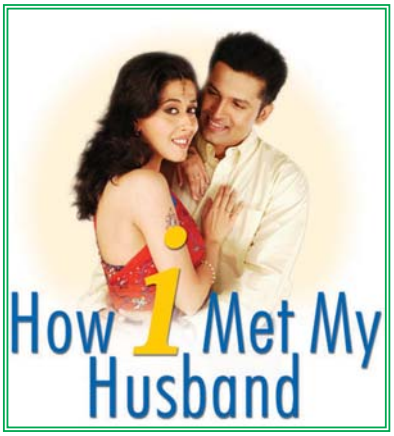
FEAR OF DEATH

His getting better did give me an opportunity to realise and understand so many things. With the advancing age the fear of death, especially among those who are cared for and respected in their families and do feel that they matter, becomes more and more pronounced. The fact however, remains that this issue generally remains beyond the pale of discussion or even a casual conversation.

One can see it in their actions, in their routine, and their growing concern for the well being of self. They try to keep themselves connected with the day today happenings, muddling themselves with the routine mundane affairs, probably in order to push this realisation to the back seat that with each passing day, month or year a digit is being added to the span of time they have already spent, already lived. At times you may find their other-worldliness, consequent upon the study of philosophical treatise like non dualism, monotheism, raj yoga, theory of karma or transmigration of soul etc. receding to the background. Stronger becomes the sense of belonging with each passing year. I may be wrong however, my feeling is, it is all a defense mechanism to ward off thanatophobia. Spend some time with them; talk to them on the issues of their interest; ask about their well being as they wake up in the morning...; just do something to make them feel that they matter... matter a lot to all of you and you do not want to lose them. You may sometime find their preferences, their engagements; quite inconvenient, even bizarre at times... bear it with patience. A twisted eyebrow or sense of irritation on your face fosters self sympathizing attitude in them and that too quite involuntarily... and having sympathy with your own self is like being on mission suicide.

The age may have started telling upon you also; you may be on the wrong side of sixties and seventies but more often than not it is the father son relationship, the protective attitude of the grownups towards those still growing that conditions their behaviour, expectations and the initial relationship with you... just respect it, they'll feel good.

Forget it not that they are not forever. They are more like raindrops glistening over the green twigs in the fuzzy light of the setting sun. They may just drop down with a slight whiff of wind or stop glistening suddenly with the sun getting enveloped in a patch of cloud or rolling down beyond the horizon. We



Silent Admirer

I was an introvert, that's why I had very few friends. On social media also, I was not much active. I was invited to a Christmas party, though I was not very fond of parties, my friends forced me to come with them. Well, each one of them was going with their boyfriend and I was single so, I felt left out. I was standing in a corner, drinking a cold drink and scrolling through my Instagram.

I was about to leave the party but the friend, who hosted the party, came to me and whispered to me that a guy likes me and he wanted to talk to me. That was quite surprising because this was new to me, I was not comfortable talking to a stranger so, I told my friend that I could not be bothered.

But deep inside, I also wanted to know who he was. So out of curiosity, I later found out who this silent admirer of mine was. I found his profile on Instagram, he was quite a handsome and attractive guy. But when I read his bio, I found out he was younger than me. I actually liked him but the age difference was coming in between. I was just scrolling down his profile and by mistake liked one of his old photos. I was so embarrassed by my action. He would now know that I was stalking him.

The same friend also hosted the new year party, I went there and he was also present. I basically ignored him because I was afraid to face him. Apart from all the games and amusements, there was an exchange of gifts. Chits were kept in a box and each person had to pick up one chit. And the person who picked up the chit had to give a present to the person whose name was written on the chit. It was a coincidence that I picked up the chit with his name and he picked up the chit with mine. So, we ended up giving gifts to each other. In his gift, there was a note, "Now I know you too liked me, then there is no harm, giving me a chance."

I liked the way he approached me and despite all the differences I gave us a chance. It worked, we started dating each other. He was 4 years younger than, I and was doing his graduation, whereas I had finished my postgraduation. Our relationship worked out. We gave each other their personal space. I got a good job after my post-graduation and waited until he achieved his ambitions and at the correct time, we both got married and we are leading a very happy life today.

–By Ashe Yepthomi

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Is Abortion A Good Idea During Teenage Pregnancy?

The big question. By Navya Bansal

Being a teenager and finding out your pregnancy that too when it was unexpected is no less than a trauma in a teenager's life. Teenage pregnancies are common nowadays which are extremely traumatic.

Teenagers due to lack of their sex education, indulge in sexual activities which cause early pregnancy. In such cases, discussion with a parent/guardian is the basic step. Generally, teenagers hesitate to share such things and try to handle it on their own which means abortion. But abortion is never a solution, unless it is properly discussed with an elder person.

Whether abortion is planned as a reaction to an unplanned pregnancy or due to an underlying medical condition, it is important to understand that most abortions in teens can be avoided.

The emotional and physical trauma that abortion causes can displace the woman's life forever.

There are certain contraceptive methods which should be used before or while sexual intercourse in order to avoid pregnancy-

- Long-acting reversible contraception, such as the implant or intra uterine device (IUD)
- Hormonal contraception, such the pill or the Depo Provera injection
- Barrier methods, such as condoms
- Emergency contraception
- Fertility awareness
- Permanent contraception, such as vasectomy and tubal ligation.

According to WHO recent report:

- Approximately 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 years and 2.5 million girls under 16 years give birth each year in developing regions.
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for 15 to 19 year-old girls globally.
- Every year, some 3.9 million girls aged 15 to 19 years undergo unsafe abortions.
- Adolescent mothers (ages 10 to 19 years) face higher risks of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, and systemic infections than women aged 20 to 24 years.

Some will say that temperance is the only solution to avoid early pregnancy, but in today's time, it is not possible.

The National Abortion Federation states that four out of five Americans have experienced sex before the age of 20, and the average age that Americans lose their virginity is 17. This means there is a staggering number of youth, teenagers and young adults who are at a growing risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and of course, unintended pregnancy.

It is also stated that 78% of pregnancies are unintentional, which means teenagers lack sex education and proper use of contraceptory methods.

Causes for early Pregnancy

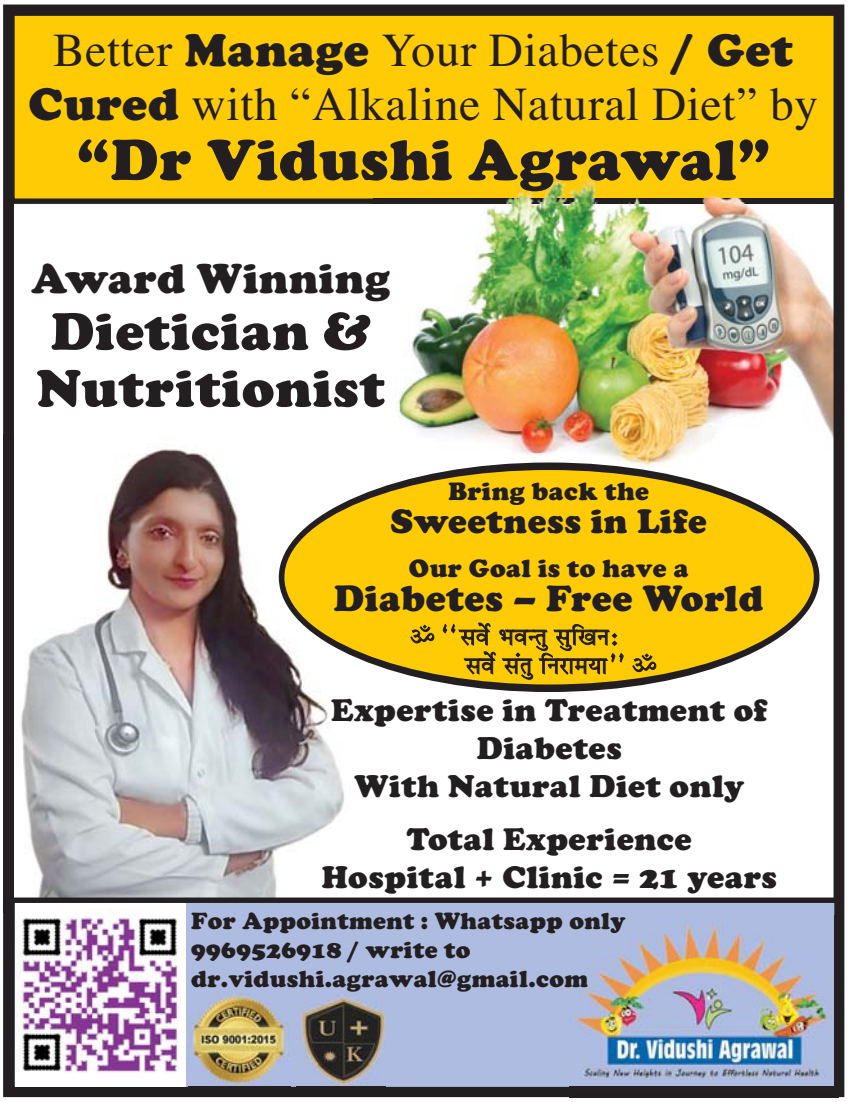
Most teenagers choose abortion when the pregnancy occurs in a casual relationship and they aren't ready to take the responsibility of a child. There could also be fear in their minds that the baby will turn the course of their lives.

Lack of money or family support can also be the reasons why teenagers choose to abort the child. Sometimes due to family pressure, girls are intended to get married at early ages due to the orthodox thinking and religious beliefs.

Due to their lack of education, they are unaware of the use of contraceptory methods to avoid pregnancy. If teenagers decide to have the baby, they may have to stop continuing their studies. This is one of the reasons why they would choose abortion over the baby.

How to handle

It is undoubtedly a tough situation to be in, but it is not the end of the world, isn't it? With your support, your child can overcome this phase without any fear. All your child needs is a little courage and understanding. Here is the list of guides for parents of teen on how to handle the pregnancy of their children:



Keep your anger in control: It is obvious to feel angry and disappointed. As a parent, you had some expectations from your child, which obviously didn't include teenage pregnancy. But you need to understand the fact that this time is too challenging for your child and she needs your support. Your teen requires someone to talk to at this very time and you have to make sure that someone is you.

If you want to discuss about how angry and disappointed you are, talk to a trusted friend or your husband. You can talk about your anger to your child too, but later, now is not the time!

Support them: Offer your daughter support. She needs a friend right now. Tell them about the difficulties that come in the way of being pregnant and share your experiences with them. They need a lot of support emotionally, in their way of being a parent themselves.

Antenatal appointments should be started as soon as possible. Take her for regular health checkups to ensure and to take proper care of the health of the baby and the mother. Offer her to take care of the baby when she has to go for her college or work or has studies to do or just needs to go out with her friends. Parents need a me-time too.

Offer all the options: Give them the choice and freedom to decide that whether they want to keep the baby or not. Support them in both the decisions. You just have to tell them about the pros and cons of both the situations so that they can make the decision accordingly.

IT IS OBVIOUS TO FEEL ANGRY AND DISAPPOINTED. AS A PARENT, YOU HAD SOME EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR CHILD, WHICH OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T INCLUDE TEENAGE PREGNANCY. BUT YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE FACT THAT THIS TIME IS TOO CHALLENGING FOR YOUR CHILD AND SHE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT. YOUR TEEN REQUIRES SOMEONE TO TALK TO AT THIS VERY TIME AND YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT SOMEONE IS YOU.

These decisions are super important as they will affect the rest of the lives of the teens. The best option would be consulting a therapist who will guide both the family and the teen as he/she can mediate different options without bias and get all parties to consider opinions alternative to their views. It is one of the most important decisions one has to make.

Suggest them to continue their studies: Being pregnant doesn't mean you have to compromise with your studies and career. You can still cherish your goals while having a baby. Educated parents are also crucial as it will ensure the bright future of their child. It is very important to ensure their as well as their child's better economic conditions in the future. As I told you earlier, your teen cannot look after her baby while pursuing her studies and in such case; you have to pose as a helping hand. Offer her to help while she'll be busy during her school hours. You both can make care arrangements and this all won't appear as a burden at all.

Tips for teenagers

Teenagers need to understand the fact that all these things are normal at this age, mistakes happen. It is not the end of the world. You can still live your life with the same potential. It's just that you don't have to hesitate in talking about this to your parents. They are the only people who can help you out in such situation. They are your only well wishers.

You just have to make the right choice. Don't rush to any decision. Take your time to think. Take advices from your mom. Think about your future plans and how this pregnancy will affect them.

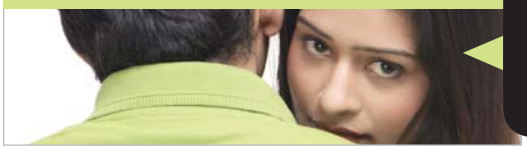
How does teenage pregnancy affect teen mothers?

Teens are at a risk of pregnancy-related high blood pressure. Risks for the baby include premature birth and low birth weight.

They also have a higher chance of becoming anaemic. Anaemia is the reduction in the number of red blood cells. This can make the mother feel tired and weak.

Not talking and discussing about pregnancy to your parents can lead to severe depression. This can lead to problems at home and at school. We

Personal Problems Q&A



Eight years ago, at the age of 42, I fell in love with a man aged 24 and married him against the wishes of no and my family. Both families refused to have anything to do with us after that and though my family relented after two years, my in-laws did not.

For the first few years my husband and I were very happy. I was the main earner but neither of us minded that. Again, I was the dominant partner, but neither of us minded that either.

To tell the truth, the main thing that held us together was a totally satisfying sex life! But we were also happy and satisfied with each other in other ways.

Recently, to my great consternation, my husband told me that he wanted a divorce. At first I did not believe him, then I broke down and asked him why. But he remained stubbornly silent. That day passed like a nightmare. I wept and begged him to tell me what I had done wrong, but my husband remained tight-lipped. Finally, he just got up and went away.

That night I thought that I would go mad, but the next day my husband returned and told me that he would stay with me if I made all my accounts joint with him. He said that he had always felt that I did not trust him because I kept my money in a separate account.

I replied that the matter had never come up and that he kept his money separate too. But he said that was a different matter. I at once said I'd put all my money into a joint account with him and he promptly hugged me and we made love.

I have to put all my money into a joint account, but something is making me pause. I don't know what it is but I am just sitting on my bed unable to move. My husband has left for work and he expects me to present him with the relevant papers when he comes home. Why am I not able to move?

What is making it impossible for you to move is your sense of self-preservation. It is telling you that by putting your money into a joint account, you are about to do something very foolish, something that works against your own good.

Making all your money accessible to your husband who seems about to leave you, will be a very foolish thing to do. Instead, you should face the fact that your husband has grown tired of you and think of ways to protect yourself and your money.

●

My husband and I are very worried parents of a sixteen-year-old daughter. She is our only child and we are having a very humiliating problem with her and do not know what to do.

The problem began when she was fourteen years old and things began to go missing from the house. At first, we thought that one of our two maids was stealing things – things like a handful of change, artificial jewelry, a small silver tumbler, a new pen and the like. But the maids had been with us for a long time and we found it difficult to suspect them. So, we did not question them, but kept a stricter eye on them. Then, one day when I was cleaning my daughter's room, I opened a drawer of her cupboard and found all the missing things there.

I told my husband what I had found and both of us did not know what to make of what our child had done. After discussing matters, we decided to just take away the stuff we had found away, but not to say anything to the child.

We did that and expected our daughter to be embarrassed when she found that we had taken away the things that she had taken and hide. But she said nothing and didn't seem embarrassed either. We then wondered if she had been playing some kind of game and tried to put the matter out of our minds.

But something continued to nag us and once in a while I would go through her drawers and invariably would I find a trove of hidden stuff. We would take it away, but she never protested about this.

And then she began taking more expensive things and hiding them in her drawer. Once I told her rather sharply that I didn't like the game she was playing, but she just looked at me with puzzled eyes and asked me what I meant. My husband decided very strongly that we would not embarrass her and so that day I said nothing. Two years have passed and now something more serious has happened.

A few days ago we got a circular from my daughter's class teacher saying that things were going missing from the bags of students and that parents should check the bags of their wards. Warning bells began to ring in our ears and we waited till our daughter went out to play with her friends and went and searched her room. And sure enough, we found a cache of things in her drawer.

Now, we do not know what to do. We cannot ignore matters any longer and neither can we go and return the things we found to the teacher.

Please advise.

No, you cannot ignore this matter any longer – in fact, you should have dealt with it earlier.

Your daughter seems to have a problem in that she cannot stop herself from taking things that belong to other people, but she neither uses them nor even remembers them. This is a serious and complicated problem and you need to take her at once to a psychiatrist. Treatment is likely to take time and you need to be patient. You should not postpone the treatment.

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The soft and spacious Amethyst Tote is essential for any city dweller on the move. With strong leather handles, this simple contemporary bag exudes simplistic elegance and fashion.

A satchel-style Flamingo handbag with pockets and multiple handles sings serious 5th avenue style. A leather accessory that goes well with your favourite pair of jeans and a casual evening dress.

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A leather Mocha Tote that is vintage-inspired with an urban edge defined by sturdy top handles. The premium woven look works equally with casual or formal attire.

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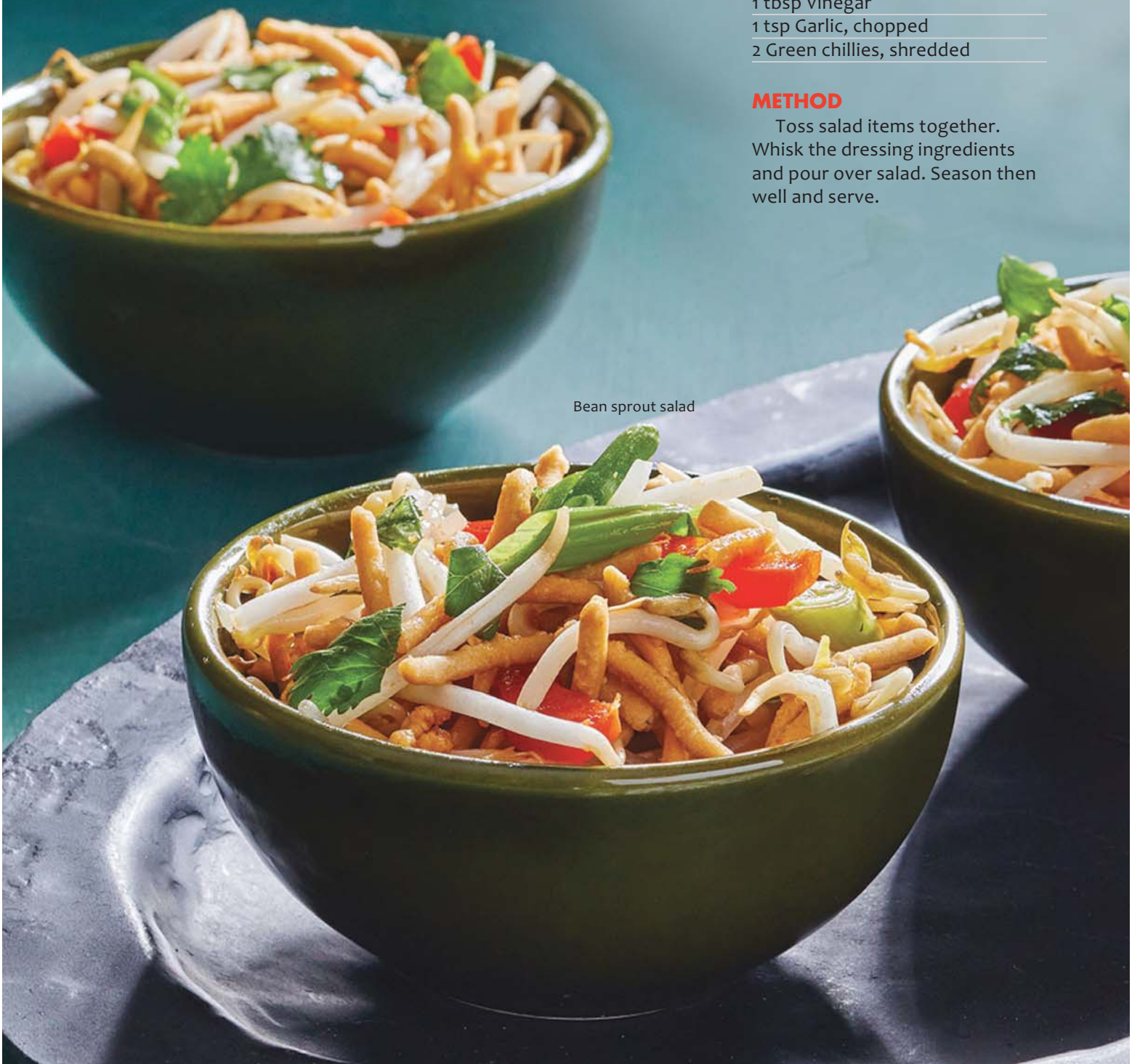
BEAN SPROUT SALAD

INGREDIENTS

200 gram Bean sprouts
2 tbsp Carrots, shredded
2 tbsp Cucumber, sliced
2 tbsp Spring onion, shredded
For the dressing:
2 tbsp Oil
1 tbsp Fish sauce
1 tbsp Vinegar
1 tsp Garlic, chopped
2 Green chillies, shredded

METHOD

Toss salad items together. Whisk the dressing ingredients and pour over salad. Season then well and serve.



Bean sprout salad

SPROUTS KHICHDI

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp mixed sprouts (moong, chana, chawli, etc.)
2 tbsp rice, soaked and drained
1/2 tsp clarified butter (ghee)
1/4 tsp cumin (jeera) seeds
A pinch of asafoetida (hing)
1 tsp onion, finely chopped
1/2 tsp garlic paste
Salt to taste
Water as required

METHOD

Heat the ghee in a pressure cooker and add the cumin seeds. When the seeds crackle, add the asafoetida and garlic paste and cook on a medium flame for a few seconds.

Add the onions and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the rice and mixed sprouts and cook for 30 seconds. Add 3/4 cup of water and salt, mix well and pressure cook for 3 whistles.

Allow the steam to escape before opening the lid. Coarsely mash the khichdi using the back of a spoon and serve it hot with fresh yoghurt.

Sprouts khichdi

OATS CHILLA

INGREDIENTS

1 cups of cooking rolled oats
1 tablespoons of Semolina
Sliced onions, sliced red and green bell
peppers, mint leaves, coriander
Oil
100g Curd or buttermilk
Salt
Crushed garlic cloves (as per taste)
Crushed green chillies
Warm water
Turmeric (for colour and taste)

METHOD

Crush the oats till they are coarse. In a bowl, mix oats, semolina, curd or buttermilk, water, salt, vegetables, mint leaves, coriander, crushed garlic cloves, turmeric and crushed chillies and make a paste the consistency of a thick batter. Set this mixture aside for about 20 minutes. Once the oats and semolina soak up the water, your chillas are ready to be made. Heat a non-stick pan on a stove and brush the pan with a little oil. Ladle the batter on the pan and spread it in circles. You can even make small holes in between your chilla and add some oil/butter (this takes away from the health benefits) for a crispier chilla. Roast the chilla till it is nice and golden and then turn it to the other side. Once the pancake is cooked on both sides, take it off the pan and pair it with some ketchup or chutney and voila!

Oats chilla

Low calorie oats idli

LOW CALORIE OATS IDLI

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Cups oats
- 200g curd (slightly sour)
- 1 tbsp mustard seeds
- 1 tbsp urad dal
- 1/2 tbsp channa dal
- 1/2 tbsp oil
- 2 tsp green chillies, finely chopped
- 1 cup carrots, grated
- 2 tbsp coriander, finely chopped
- 1/2 tbsp turmeric powder
- 2 tbsp salt
- A pinch of fruit salt

METHOD

On a tawa, dry roast the oats until it turns slightly brown and then powder the oats in a mixer. In a pan, add oil, mustard seeds, urad dal, channa dal and allow the mustard to splutter and the dals to turn golden. To this, add the chopped chillies, coriander and grated carrots. Add the turmeric powder and fry for a minute. Add this seasoning to the powdered oats mixture and add the curd to it to make a batter like that of idli batter's consistency. You can add as much curd to the mixture to achieve the consistency, but do not add water to the batter. Grease the idli steamer plates with oil and pour the batter into each area of the steamer. Steam the idlis for 15 minutes. Note: To know if the idli is cooked, poke an idli with knife and check if the batter does not stick to the knife. Once done remove the idlis and serve with Onion chutney.

LOW CALORIE BHEL PURI

INGREDIENTS

- 100 gms puffed rice
- 2 tbsp tamarind pulp
- 2 tbsp mint chutney
- 1/2 tsp chaat masala
- 3 Green chilies
- salt to taste
- Bean sprouts
- Garnishing: Sev
- Coriander leaves

METHOD

Put the puffed rice in a bowl; add onions, sprouts, green chillies, coriander leaves, tamarind pulp, mint chutney, chaat masala or aamchur. Mix it well. Garnish with sev and coriander leaves. Serve

Low cal bhel puri

MIXED SPROUTS CORN CHAAT

INGREDIENTS

15 gms mixed sprouts, boiled
15 gms corn, boiled
1 tomato, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp coriander chutney
1/2 tsp cumin powder
1/2 tsp red chilli powder or paprika
salt to taste
Handful of pomegranate seeds
Handful of coriander leaves, chopped

METHOD

Soak the sprouts overnight and next morning pressure cook it for around 10-15 minutes. Strain well. Now in as bowl, combine all the ingredients together and serve. Simple to prepare, easy to consume.

Mixed sprouts corn chaat

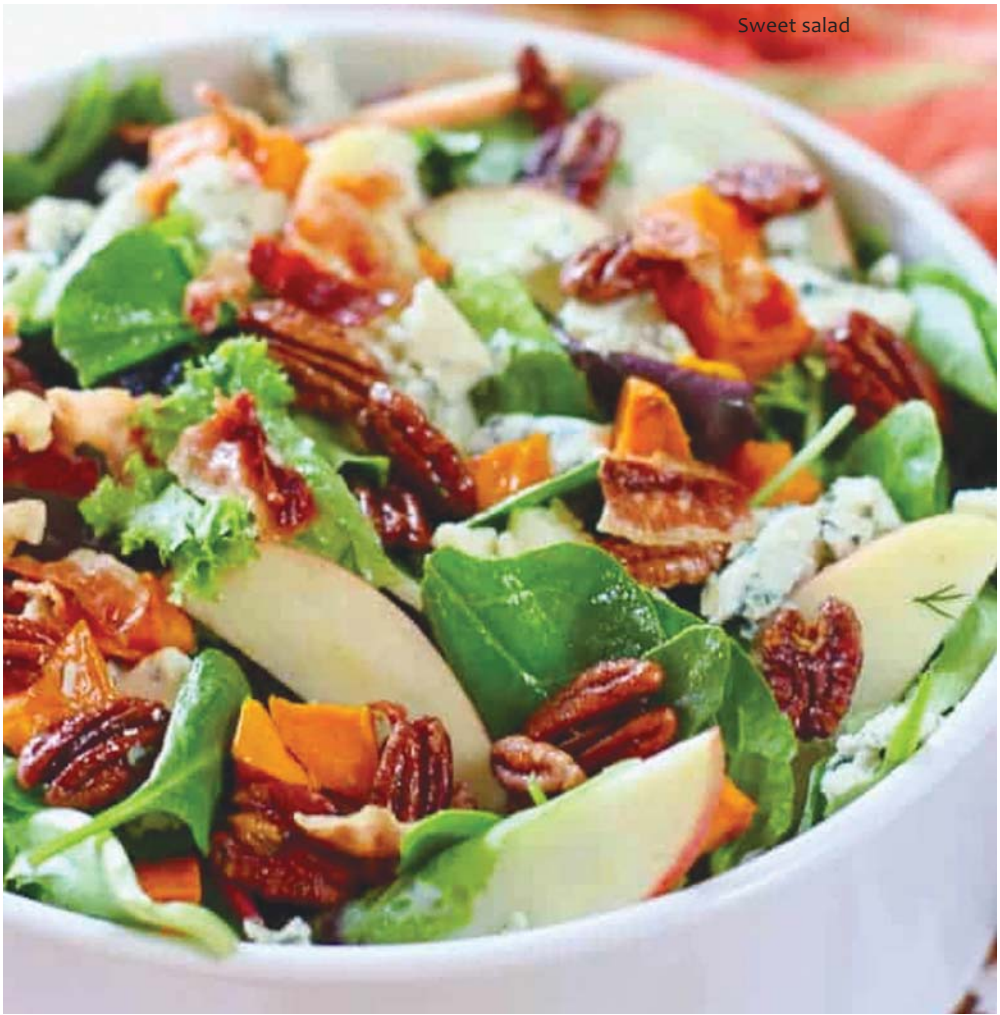
SWEET SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 zucchini, sliced in cubes
1 carrot, sliced in cubes
1/4 cup cashew cream
10 raisins, soaked
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice (optimal)
2 tablespoon honey

METHOD

Take cashew cream and honey in a mixing bowl. Mix well. Now, add raisins cubes of zucchini and carrots to this mixing bowl. Add lemon juice. Mix all the ingredients well. Serve the fresh sweet salad.



Sweet salad

kachumbar salad

KACHUMBAR SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 cucumber, peeled, finely chopped
1 tomato, finely chopped
2 tablespoon peanuts, roosted
1 small capsicum, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
Green chili to taste, finely chopped
1 tablespoon lemon
Salt to taste (optional, better skin it)
Coriander to garnish, chopped

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together. Garnish with coriander. Enjoy!

Fruit salad

FRUIT SALAD

INGREDIENTS

2 large mangoes
2 medium sized bananas
2 to 3 small to medium sized chickoos (sapota)
1 small papaya or ½ of one large papaya
dry fruits like cashew almonds, walnut or of íyour choice (optional)
few mint leaves for garnishing

METHOD

Peel and chop mangoes, banana, papaya and chickoo into bite sized pieces. Add everything in a salad bowl or any large bowl. Mix the fruits well. Dry roast the dry fruits in a oven or in pan to make them crisp. Add dry fruits on top of the fruits. Add few mint leaves for garnishing the fruit salad. Serve the fruit salad immediately.

VEGETABLE SOUP

INGREDIENTS

1/2 medium carrot
2 tablespoon cabbage
1/2 small green chili
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
5 green beans
1/2 bunch coriander leaves
1 teaspoon corn flour
salt as required

METHOD

Step 1

Vegetable Soup is a perfect healthy recipe to go-for, especially, when you don't feel like putting in much efforts! Here's how you go about preparing this delicacy. Take a bowl and mix the corn flour with 1/4 cup of water and keep aside.

Palak paneer tikki

Vegetable soup

Heat a heavy-bottomed pan over medium flame. Pour 3 cups of water and bring to a boil.

Step 2

Add the carrot, beans, cabbage, coriander leaves and green chilies. Cook till tender. Add the cornflour and bring to a boil. Eaten to accentuate the taste of this dish, you can top it with some grated cheese eaten. If you want to make it a bit spicy, you can also add spices as per your taste preference. Remove and transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle pepper powder and salt. Serve hot with a choice of garlic bread.

CARROT JUICE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups carrots roughly chopped
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
3/4 cup ice cubes
2 cups water
1 tsp fresh ginger peeled

Carrot juice

METHOD

Add ingredients to Four Side or Wild Side jar in order listed and secure lid. Select "Whole Juice" or blend on a Medium-High speed for 50-60 seconds.

PALAK PANEER TIKKI

INGREDIENTS

Paneer: 50 gm.
Spinach: 100 gm.
Egg: 1 whole
Cheese: 1 cube
Salt to taste
Pepper: 1/4 tsp.
Chilli Powder: 1/4 tsp.
Jeera powder: 1/2 tsp.
Ghee: 10 gm.

METHOD

Boil the spinach and blend it and mix it with grated paneer and add grated cheese. Add all spices and egg and mix well. Heat ghee in a pan and make small cutlets of this mixture and cook on a low flame for 2-3 minuteseach side. We

Recipes by: Dietitian Rajat Jain
Clinical Nutrionist & Weight Loss Expert
Founder of Health Wealth Diet Clinic
Instagram: dietitianrajatjain
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Raising Voices!

Disabled Women Must Be Included in Discussions Against Male Violence.

By Aditi Maheshwari

The outbreak of COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented rise in the cases of domestic violence. Crisis perpetuates the existing inequalities in the society and has even highlighted the fact that women with disabilities are more vulnerable as they stand at an intersection of gender and disability. However, its highly disappointing to find that the justice system continues to remain inaccessible to them. The overpowering authority surrounding the disabled because of their dependency on others to meet their basic needs often traps them into un-holistic atmosphere. Women with disabilities find it difficult to establish their individual identities in a society that claims to be humanitarian but in reality, is dehumanised towards physically challenged people.

Raise Objections When It Matters Most

To constantly live under pressure of being mishandled anytime in the name of help, feels extremely disgusting. Being vulnerable due to handicap often puts people into not only uncomfortable but many times disrespectful experiences. The concept of 'humanity' feels non-existential to people who have experienced the violence and abuse. The disregard of such violence is derogatory and it largely goes unnoticed and unacknowledged. It is not just the responsibility of the Government but at an individual level every member of the society should be held responsible for this situation. It's shameful not only for the ones committing it but also on the part of the one's not doing anything to stop the abuse and not raising their voice against such violence. Indifference in such situations is equally heinous as the crime.

The Disheartening Factor

Isn't it strange that in a country like India where religion and spirituality are highly valued, people find it a taboo to acknowledge the existence of human exploitation and to leverage accountable cum responsible measures to limit and extinguish such horror experiences? When it comes to issues of tax, politics, price of petrol, and things of similar nature, we have huge discussions on television, radio and other platforms and we make sure the subject is dealt with in the most appropriate ways. When it comes to issues of disability, we don't see the subject being discussed sufficiently and what is more disheartening is that if someone picks up this subject to raise questions and come to a fruitful solution, the process does not involve the opinions of the disabled people or people who are physically challenged. The failures simply highlights that there is a sheer lack of responsibility, understanding and knowledge about the concerns of women with disabilities at an institutional level.

Make It Easy To Confront These Issues

It is important to talk to people who have first-hand experience of such dreadful events that destroys an individual not just physically but mentally and emotionally too. To include them in the quorum of the meetings designed to handle these issues is much needed and relevant step towards initiating ways to resolve these issues.

The process should be made such that individuals are comfortable sharing their experiences, they should not be made to feel embarrassed for raising their voice for justice and for their right to freedom, to live at peace without constantly feeling fearful and less than. It's high time we make it easier for the physically challenged people to live an empowered life. About 2.2% of India's population lives with some kind of physical or mental disability, as per the National Statistics Office report on disability released last year. Like other disadvantaged groups, the disabled in India are entitled to some benefits, ranging from reservation in educational institutes to concessions on railway tickets, etc. But what about the safety and liberty of such individuals?

THIS THREAT OF VIOLENCE CAN TRANSLATE INTO A NAGGING FEELING OF POWERLESSNESS AND LACK OF CONTROL, MAKING THE REALIZATION OF THE PROMISES HELD BY PARTS III AND IV OF OUR CONSTITUTION A REMOTE POSSIBILITY FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES.

Supreme Court Initiative Towards It

Recently the Supreme Court of India took an initiative in this regard. "For many disabled women and girls in India, the threat of violence is an all-too-familiar fixture of their lives, contracting their constitutionally guaranteed freedom to move freely and curtailing their ability to lead full and active lives. This threat of violence can translate into a nagging feeling of powerlessness and lack of control, making the realization of the promises held by Parts III and IV of our Constitution a remote possibility for women with disabilities," said a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah on Apr 29, 2021.

Upholding the life sentence awarded to one Patan Jamal Vali of Andhra Pradesh for sexually assaulting a blind girl who was the sister of his friend, the bench said, "Women with disabilities are more susceptible to sexual violence as the accused perceives that the testimony of the rape survivor would not be fool proof because of her physical impairments."

Writing the judgment, Justice Chandrachud said, "We do not mean to subscribe to the stereotype that persons with disabilities are weak and helpless, incapable of charting the course of their lives or

to deprive them of the agency and bodily autonomy that we all possess and are entitled to exercise. Such a negative presumption of disability translating into incapacity would be inconsistent with the forward-thinking conceptualization of disabled lives embodied in our law and, increasingly, albeit slowly, in our social consciousness."

"Instead, our aim is to highlight the increased vulnerability and reliance on others that is occasioned by having a disability which makes women with disabilities more susceptible to being at the receiving end of sexual violence. As the facts of this case make painfully clear, women with disabilities, who inhabit a world designed for the able-bodied, are often perceived as 'soft targets' and 'easy victims' for the commission of sexual violence. It is for this reason that our legal response to such violence, in the instant case as well as at a systemic level, must exhibit attentiveness to this salient fact," Justice Chandrachud said.

The bench said, "Testimony of a prosecutrix with a disability, or of a disabled witness for that matter, cannot be considered weak or inferior, only because such an individual interacts with the world in a different manner, vis-a-vis their able- bodied counterparts. .. the court appreciating such testimony needs to be attentive to the fact that the witness' disability can have the consequence of the testimony being rendered in a different form, relative to that of an able-bodied witness," the bench said.

The bench laid down some guidelines to make the criminal justice system more disabled-friendly:

- The National Judicial Academy and state judicial academies are requested to sensitize trial and appellate judges to deal with cases involving survivors of sexual abuse.
- The Bar Council of India can consider introducing courses in the LL.B program that cover these topics and the intersectional nature of violence more generally.

- The National Crimes Record Bureau should seriously consider the possibility of maintaining disaggregated data on gender-based violence. Disability must be one of the variables on the basis of which such data must be maintained so that the scale of the problem can be mapped out and tailored remedial action can be taken.
- Police officers should be provided sensitization, on a regular basis, to deal with cases of sexual violence against women with disabilities, in an appropriate way.

SUCH A NEGATIVE PRESUMPTION OF DISABILITY TRANSLATING INTO INCAPACITY WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE FORWARD- THINKING CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DISABLED LIVES EMBODIED IN OUR LAW AND, INCREASINGLY, ALBEIT SLOWLY, IN OUR SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The Stigma And Shame Attached With Disability

The stigma and shame attached with disability causes women with disabilities to be treated insignificantly. Gender stereotypes and prejudices structuring the system curtail the right of women with disabilities to access justice in cases of gender-based violence and abuses. It's time we stop treating them as if they are invisible and make them feel belonged and part of the society. If we claim to be truly educated, then no discrimination should exist. It's time we stop mitigating the effects of biases and take initiative to spread equality and inclusivity for all members of the society.

However, it's important here to remember that to eradicate any sort of violence, abuse or other derogatory actions at root level, it's vital for everyone to play their role in eliminating it. The police, government, courts will play their roles but as individuals we should be attentive towards the needs of others and not just pretend that we did not notice any wrong doing and pass by. Unity has strength, when we collectively stand for any cause, we can bring significant transformation.

This can be crucial, one man/woman with courage can ignite courage and resilience among people who don't feel powerful enough to raise objections. Let's not fail humanity, let each one of us pledge to help the unprivileged and physically challenged people to live an empowered life, a life of dignity and grace and not let them succumb to ill treatments because of their inabilities or handicaps. We

Teenache Q&A

A NEIGHBOUR WHO IS A GOOD FRIEND OF MY PARENTS ALWAYS keeps staring at me in a very objectionable manner. He also hugs me and pinches my cheeks playfully. I am a 14-year-old girl who has a buxom figure. Maybe, he don't have decent intentions, but somehow his behaviour gives me the creeps. Should I tell my mother and ask her not to allow him to touch me? Or, am I misinterpreting the whole thing?

The question is not whether your complaining is right or wrong, but whether you resent this behaviour or not. You are the sole owner of your body and no one can violate it in any manner by touch, sight or words. It does seem that this person is slyly molesting you, presuming you will not be able to do anything about this.

Do tell your mother about your discomfort, and she will surely ensure that you are not subjected to such indiscreet behavior again, without causing any embarrassment to anyone. If your mother does not give any credence to your confidence, you should take matters in your own hands. The next time, the guy tries to hug you, move away, and say clearly, "No, please, I don't like it." That will stop this intentional or unintentional behaviour right away.

●

I AM A 16-YEAR-OLD 10TH STD GIRL WHO COMES FROM A MIDDLE-class orthodox family. A boy in our class has befriended me and this is making me happy because for all this time, all my other friends had boyfriends and I had none. He wants me to be more fashionable and modern. To please him, I wear frocks, jeans and tops, etc., although I am used to being in salwar kameez outfits. He has even convinced me to use light make-up, which I have to conceal from my family. Now, he wants me to cut my long plaits and have a short hairstyle. I am shocked and disturbed. My hair is my pride and joy. He says, if I love him, I should do this to please him. Please advise.

You should definitely not do anything that you do not want to do just to please him. That will definitely lead to your feeling resentful and angry, which will poison your relationship without fail.

If your changing your couture and using make-up, made you also feel good, it is all right. If it does not, just be yourself, do not change.

Do you plan to be putty in the hands of others just to keep them by your side? Do you want to change yourself to meet the whims and fancies of all your boyfriends? Have your own identity, and be proud of what you are, and what you stand for. They should accept you as you are.

Your boyfriend's demands reflect his selfish, insensitive attitude. He does not seem to consider your feelings. Do you want to have him as your friend? Do some serious thinking about this relationship.

●

MY CLOSE FRIEND SECRETLY SHOWED ME HER thighs which were full of cuts. I was horrified. She went on to say that she had administered these herself! Every time she feels angry frustated or grief, the cuts herself with the blade. She assures me that it was a common practice. I did not know how to react to her revelation. Keep quiet, tell her mother, our teacher, or what? Please help. We are 15-year-old school girls.

This practice of "cutting "is fairly widespread among teenagers. Just as older persons take to drink, tobacco and drugs to relieve their stress and tension, youngsters claim that the sharp stinging pain and the sight of seeing blood slowly seeping through the cut, distracts their minds from the pressures they are facing.

Psychiatrists aver that most teens will grow out of this as they become more adept at dealing with negative situations on a daily basis. But, with talk therapy, they can definitely be helped to deal with the issues they are facing and which is making them want to hurt themselves. It could be a good idea to have a private talk with her mother, if you feel she is understanding and empathetic, or your class teacher who could refer her to the school counsellor. Your friend's showing you her thighs could indeed be her cry for help.

●

I WAS A VERY PLUMP GIRL SOME YEARS BACK, BUT THE REGULAR ribbing I got from my friends and my family induced me to start a rigorous diet regimen and join the gym. I have now become very slim. But there is a problem. I just don't feel like eating at all. My enjoyment eating food has completely disappeared. I can do without eating for a whole day. My parents are worried that I will be malnourished and have deficiency diseases. In fact, I am steadily losing weight and starting to look ill. Why is this happening to me? How can I get back on track again?

It is best you consult your family doctor and find out the causes of your lack of appetite and steady weight loss. It could be a psychological reason too.

Your anxiety to lose weight in the first place may have triggered off anorexia nervosa which is a condition where the person is unable to enjoy and retain any food. In extreme situations, it will need hospitalization and nasal feeding.

Therapy is also advised for anorexia patients to ease them into regular food regimen. There is indeed a risk of deficiency diseases too if you do not eat nutritious meals. So, without more ado, get help.

This column is especially for teenagers. Adolescence can, we know, be a trying and confusing time. There are so many questions which seem to evade solutions. A wrong decision, or an indiscreet move, can spell disaster and ruin a life. Share your problem, worry or doubt with us and **WE** will help you find a way out — to a happier, healthier and more successful adult life. Send your problems to:
WOMAN'S ERA E-3, Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110 055, Womansera.com

Patriarchy 2021

Ways of the world. By Raunak Goswami

I have recently been to a wedding, even during these dire situations' weddings take place at full flex because they seem more important than the life-death situations currently persisting. A traditional wedding ceremony is unquestionably a great place to witness patriarchal norms that exist in the core of the society.

Patriarchy has become a very familiar site undistinguishable from the reality. The family I was brought up in constantly served me the rules and being a daughter, I reverently took them all in, whenever I questioned them, the answer was always a similar one "these are the ways of the world." Most of these rules were passed down by my mother who must've received from her mother and so on.

It wasn't until my post-graduation that I began to realize the flaws with the "ways of the world." I have started noticing these misogynistic views casually being circulated by both the sexes. It was the from the conversations with my friends and classmates that struck me with reality that I too, was a carrier of those biases. I decided to mend my way of thinking and maybe speak for the rights of my own sex whenever and wherever it was possible. In the words of author Lois Tyson "I am a recovering patriarchal woman."

I have been living away from home for past five years until covid brought us back to our bases. It is now when I am older that these misogynistic views have become troublesome to me.

Being away I had a pass to not show up at any family functions and did not have to sit through their conversations but for past one year being so close to the family mirrored the ideals they held or basically of most Indian families which generally looked down on women. They are easily accepted as the weaker sections. So now, Indian men are starting to grow restless because their wives do not treat them as God and maybe their sons will not be regarded as one. Blaming the new age women for the strain in the marital bliss is the new form of misogyny. They are absolutely against women being independent and calling out their wrong doings and taking lesser shit from men. A working woman is only acceptable if she does all the household chores with it. I have been called out a number of times for believing that the husband or at least the house help will share the load, it is always the woman who must do everything.

DIVORCE RATES ARE INCREASING

The divorce rates in India have been increasing and the blame is obviously put on a woman because "they wouldn't sacrifice enough like their predecessor." I recall an incident that took place few days back which strengthened the aforementioned belief. A distant relative of mine who shall remain anonymous has returned to her maternal home because of some problems in her married life and my aunt was judgmental enough to quickly respond "she has a job and definitely must not be respectful towards her husband, so why would he keep her!" I seem to lack the capability to relate "job" and "respect" but apparently, it's a thing that makes women less respectful towards their "godlike" husbands. The question I ask myself is why the husband is never to blame and it's clear that he has been backed up by hundred years of patriarchal norms and gender roles.

Misogyny is not just a part of Indian families but had been gracefully portrayed in the Indian Cinema. My mother was watching movie from 1955, in it the lead actress asks a woman if she's ever beaten by her husband to which the latter responds "maarte hai vo toh pyaar bhi to karte hai na" You see, that is the problem, husband's supremacy is so built up that even violence is acceptable to women. Even in 21st century terms like "biwi pe lagaam" are used constantly as if wives are animals to be tamed or controlled. Mothers teach their daughters not to have any fun in life because it is not in their lives to have fun, only duties to their family. Most of the fun part is kept on reserve for the husbands to fulfill.

MOTHERS TEACH THEIR DAUGHTERS NOT TO HAVE ANY FUN IN LIFE BECAUSE IT IS NOT IN THEIR LIVES TO HAVE FUN, ONLY DUTIES TO THEIR FAMILY. MOST OF THE FUN PART IS KEPT ON RESERVE FOR THE HUSBANDS TO FULFILL.

Schools too are ardent supporters of patriarchy no matter if they are temples of knowledge, the general discrimination is much evident there. During my life at school, we never had a sports team for girls. The length of the skirts was always a problem, shaming a girl for talking to a boy was regular affair. The place that is meant to teach equality became the place to wear off the belief.

There is so much gender bias in everyday life that we do not realize in general. Every woman tells me that I will learn to love everything I despise now after I go to my in-law's house. They do not understand that it is not acceptance but compromise. One of my cousin sisters celebrated that her father-in-law let her travel alone this one time, it was a feat to her, whilst it is just travelling.

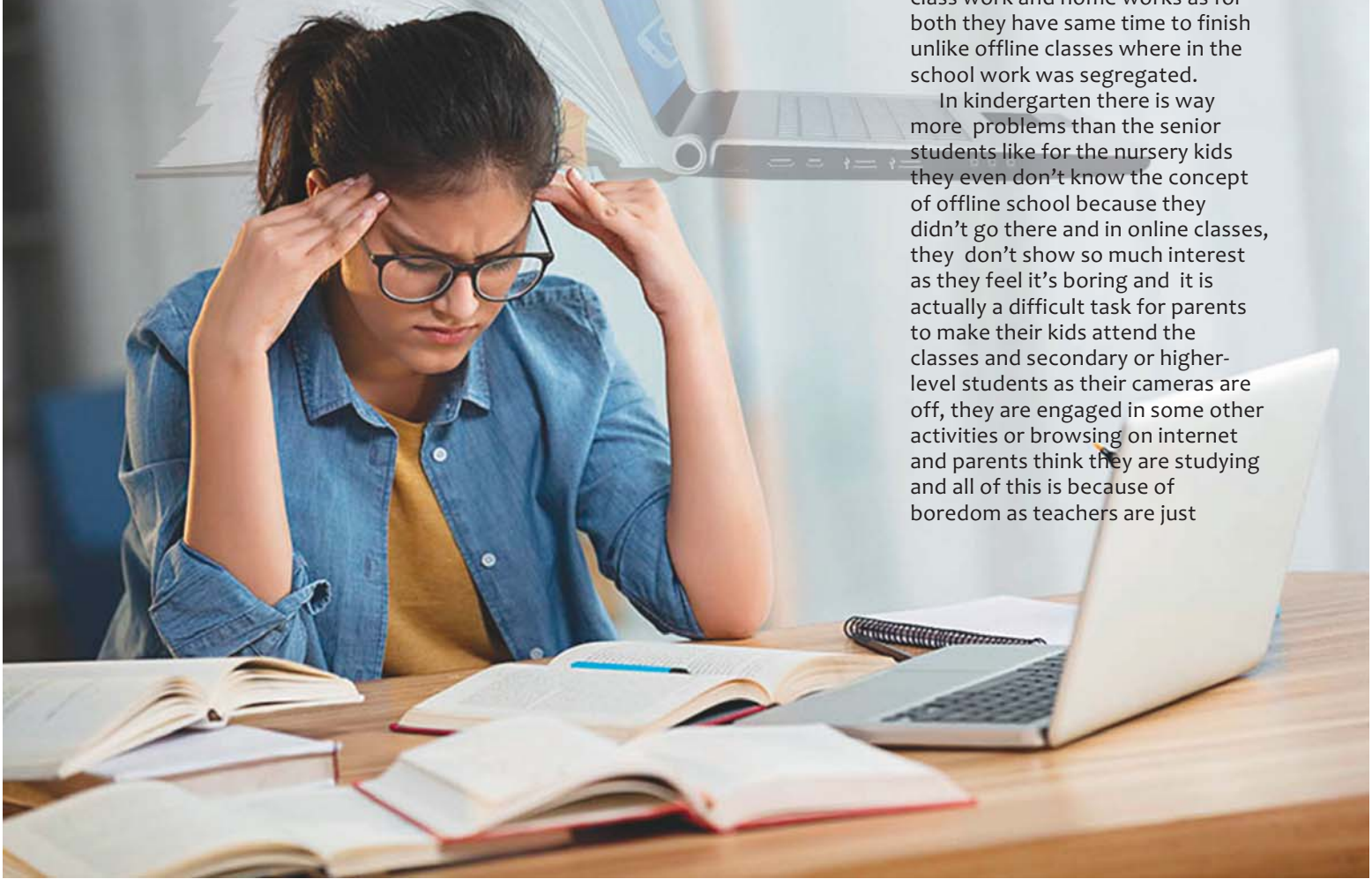
Men in the world has started blaming "Feminism" for everything a woman does. Is it because women believe that their subjugation is a result of patriarchy? I do not understand why men do not get that Feminism advocates both sexes. Patriarchy also affects men as much as women because it refuses basic rights like 'crying' and 'making a home' to men. It is a lot to think about.

PANDEMIC and Students

Impact of Online Classes. By Priyanka Trehan

Due to the covid-19 pandemic we have suffered in all the sectors of society be it health, economic sector or educational sector etc. the lockdown has affected the income of every group from lower income group to higher income group but with this there was one segment which was affected the most i.e., STUDENTS. Because of this pandemic since past two years students are unable to attend school offline and for their betterment online classes has been started because like it has been said "IN FACE OF ADVERSITY WE HAVE A CHOICE, WE CAN BE BITTER OR WE CAN BE BETTER" But is it really for betterment of them?

According to a UNICEF study, COVID-19 affected 1.6 billion children globally. In INDIA COVID-19 induced the closure of 1.5 million schools and impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. Online classes may be the need of the hour but it has affected the students psychologically and sociologically.



The psychological impact of online classes on students:

Online classes have affected the student's life in number of ways like when offline school were open there was a pattern fixed for students like they have proper routine set while in online classes there is no proper routine, some students just wake up 5 mins before the class and just sit like that in class half awake and half sleepy. They also feel heightened anxiety and stress about keeping their school work up to date because being given a lot of their time for classes still they are unable to cop up with class work and home works as for both they have same time to finish unlike offline classes where in the school work was segregated.

In kindergarten there is way more problems than the senior students like for the nursery kids they even don't know the concept of offline school because they didn't go there and in online classes, they don't show so much interest as they feel it's boring and it is actually a difficult task for parents to make their kids attend the classes and secondary or higher-level students as their cameras are off, they are engaged in some other activities or browsing on internet and parents think they are studying and all of this is because of boredom as teachers are just

teaching without fun activities and also there are lots of students in one class so teacher is unable to check on each of them. offline schooling is the way of social interaction, where they build friendship which gives them security and sense of self-esteem which is more important in primary level because they just started coming out of their comfort zone or family zone but in online classes it is not possible to interact with other children because they just meet online for classes and other then that they even don't know about their classmates.

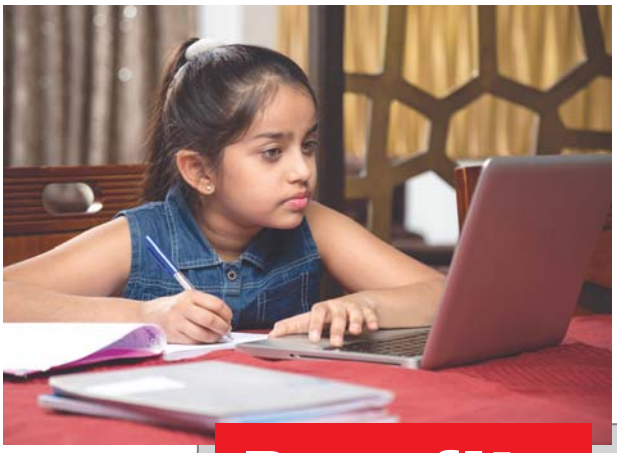
So online classes hinder this component of their psychological development. Due to these pandemic kids are unable to step outside the houses which has increased their screen time and now when online classes are there the screen time has increased a lot then before and they are not doing any physical activities at this time while they are in growing age which results in adaptation of unhealthy habits like. Their eating habits has been changed a lot when they were going to school there was a fix time for every meal and with that, they were doing workout also in school like playing games or playing in intervals but at home they are just sitting in front of screen with cameras off and eating junk whole day.

Sociological impacts of online learning on students:

According to some psychiatrist what is really missing in online classes is the peer-to-peer interaction. Social learning is not happening as children are lacking interaction with friends and outside world through online classes which effects has a social impact on students because for children social bonding is must. Children make their perception about the society from society itself in which they are living i.e., from their home, neighbourhood or school and online classes barriers their perception. And the social backgrounds of students which influences attitude and behaviour i.e., their social perspective has been limited to online classes which has made them socially isolated. For online classes one needs a smartphone or any device on which zoom app or google meet can function and with that lots and lots of internet data which is difficult for financially weaker sections and this is the major drawback of online classes that it cannot be functional in remote areas or not many people can afford it.

The benefit of offline classes was with the bonding among each other they also learn about sharing or caring for each of them which is a very important thing for growing children because now a days in every house mostly there is one kid with no siblings due to which one doesn't have the habit of sharing or understanding other kids which lacks in online classes.

ACCORDING TO SOME PSYCHIATRIST WHAT IS REALLY MISSING IN ONLINE CLASSES IS THE PEER-TO-PEER INTERACTION. SOCIAL LEARNING IS NOT HAPPENING AS CHILDREN ARE LACKING INTERACTION WITH FRIENDS AND OUTSIDE WORLD THROUGH ONLINE CLASSES WHICH EFFECTS HAS A SOCIAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS.



Benefits of online learning

Every coin has two sides one is effects and other is benefits now we will talk about other side of coin i.e., benefits of online classes.

With the increasing crime in India no one especially kids are not safe going alone to schools or tuitions so due to this pandemic being at home in safe environment surrounded by loved ones enhances the mental health of child and they can concentrate easily on studies. Online classes have opened up various alternatives in courses, one can complete his studies while continuing the job. Like I said earlier offline school is a way to socialize for teenager or kids but all social interactions are not positive, as we have heard about bulling or ragging in school and colleges so online classes helps to escape from the depression or mental torture one gets from the fear of bullying.

Through online learning geographical boundaries can be eliminated because its wider the audience. it also helps in connecting with each other like students to teacher to other students. And it has emerged a life saviour for students which helped them in continuing their studies. We

Do You Have Leaping or Limping Mind?

The power of subconscious mind. By Dr Rajendra Kumar Bhola

Many underestimate their own intelligence. About forty mental dimensions or factors have so far been mapped out. No one shines in all forty. For instance, a person may write good English but when he tries to figure out his sums, he is stumped.

Another is excellent at Mathematics, but his mind goes blank if he is asked to write or say a few words about a topical subject.

You are worried that there are two or three tasks you cannot handle well but you forget that there are other thirty seven or thirty eight mental dimensions in which you can shine. Even the mediocre man is brighter than he is usually given credit for. If an average man used his intelligence to the limits of his potentialities, he would be classed genius!

Here is the story of a man who came to an industrialist and offered to show his employees how to do their work better.

"What's the use?" said the industrialist. "They are not doing as well now as they already know how to do."

William James asserted that we are only a small faction, about a tenth of our brain power. To make the most of our powers, we must learn to use both our conscious and unconscious mind to advantage.

A young man passed a shop window, glancing at it briefly through the corner of his eye. Asked what he had seen, he laughed and said," "Why, nothing. I went by so

hurriedly that I paid no attention to its contents."

But under hypnosis, he remembered dozens of objects in the window he had barely looked at! The subconscious mind observes and retains impressions which we are consciously not aware of.

William James tells that in a certain town in Germany, villagers were driven out of their wits when an illiterate woman, while ill, began to spout literary quotations.

Suppose you once learned typing, then dropped it. In two years you lose about a third of your typing ability. When you try to relearn typing, you naturally pick it up much more rapidly than you did originally. You once learned a quotation. Five years later, you can relearn the same quotation, saving about 43 percent of the time it would have otherwise taken you.

FLASHES OF INTUITION

The mind has such great powers that if you learn to tap even a small fraction of it, it will leap, where as, ordinarily it just limps.

The first step is to study the subject you are eager to learn. Your subconscious guides you to success by flashing the signal of interest in a particular area. If you defy it, you do so at your risk.

A young man who was lured by business, enrolled in a law school course because his father wanted him to become a lawyer. He could not make the grade. But as soon as he switched to business administration, he did brilliantly. Henri Bergson says, "Intuition is the only means for perceiving the heart of things. Dr J. B. Rhine has shown that some of us possess marked intuitive power, while others have only limited intuition. Tests have proved that most intuitive individuals are usually those who believe in the power of their intuition. Don't ignore your hunches." Regard them as a gift of nature.

You can prepare your own mind for the flashes of the intuition by learning as much as possible about one special subject. Then, if you are at all intuitive, you will be able to utilise your intuition, just as Dr Fleming did once, when a mold flew into his laboratory. The result was the discovery of Penicillin.

But no untrained mind could possibly have gotten the hunch in the first place, even if a dozen molds had flown in and changed a dozen culture patterns of bacteria.

To prepare your own mind for success, absorb knowledge like a sponge.

Get the basic facts about the problem, and write them down. This method has worked for scientists, mathematicians, authors, and even average people. It will work for you!

Just as a muscle may degenerate due lack of use, to certain qualities of mind deteriorate when they are never called into action.

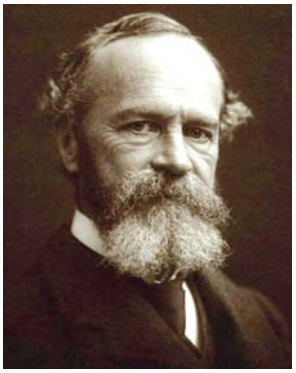
Start using your mind so that it becomes flighty instead of flabby!

Most people don't think, they just rearrange their prejudices!

Why do you fail to exercise your intelligence?

You let our emotions ruin your judgement. You accept prejudices installed in you by others. You can usually lessen bias if you try to discover whether there is a logical, factual basis for an opinion you cling to.

You set your alarm for 7A.M., but cannot decide to get up when the alarm rings, or wait for another 10 minutes.



THERE ARE OVER FORTY DIMENSIONS TO YOUR MIND. IF YOU ARE WEEK IN SOME OF THESE YOU CAN SURELY SHINE IN OTHERS. WILLIAM JAMES SAYS, "COMPARED WITH YOU OUGHT TO BE, WE ARE ONLY HALF AWAKE. WE ARE MAKING USE OF ONLY A SMALL PART OF OUR POSSIBLE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES."

Should you take shower first or shave first? Again, this should be decided once, on the basis of common sense and efficiency.

The night before an important appointment, you decide exactly what clothes you are going to wear. Have them in perfect condition, within easy reach, when you dress for the appointment.

Intelligence is the ability to learn, to think, and to solve problems. It is not the sole procession of the genius. Alfred N. Steele of Pepsi Cola says "My cardinal rule is: don't guess at anything. If the right kind of effort is made, it is usually possible to get the facts."

A man might learn all the theories about how to fix a faulty wire but until he has actually worked on a number of problems, it has very little utility.

You might learn all the rules for French grammar, but unless you continue to read or speak French, your conscious mind would, within a few years, forget much of this knowledge. Knowledge is quickly forgotten if it is not applied. No wind serves the man who has no port of destination.

There are over forty dimensions to your mind. If you are weak in some of these, you can surely shine in others. William James says, "Compared with you ought to be, we are only half awake. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources."

Short Story

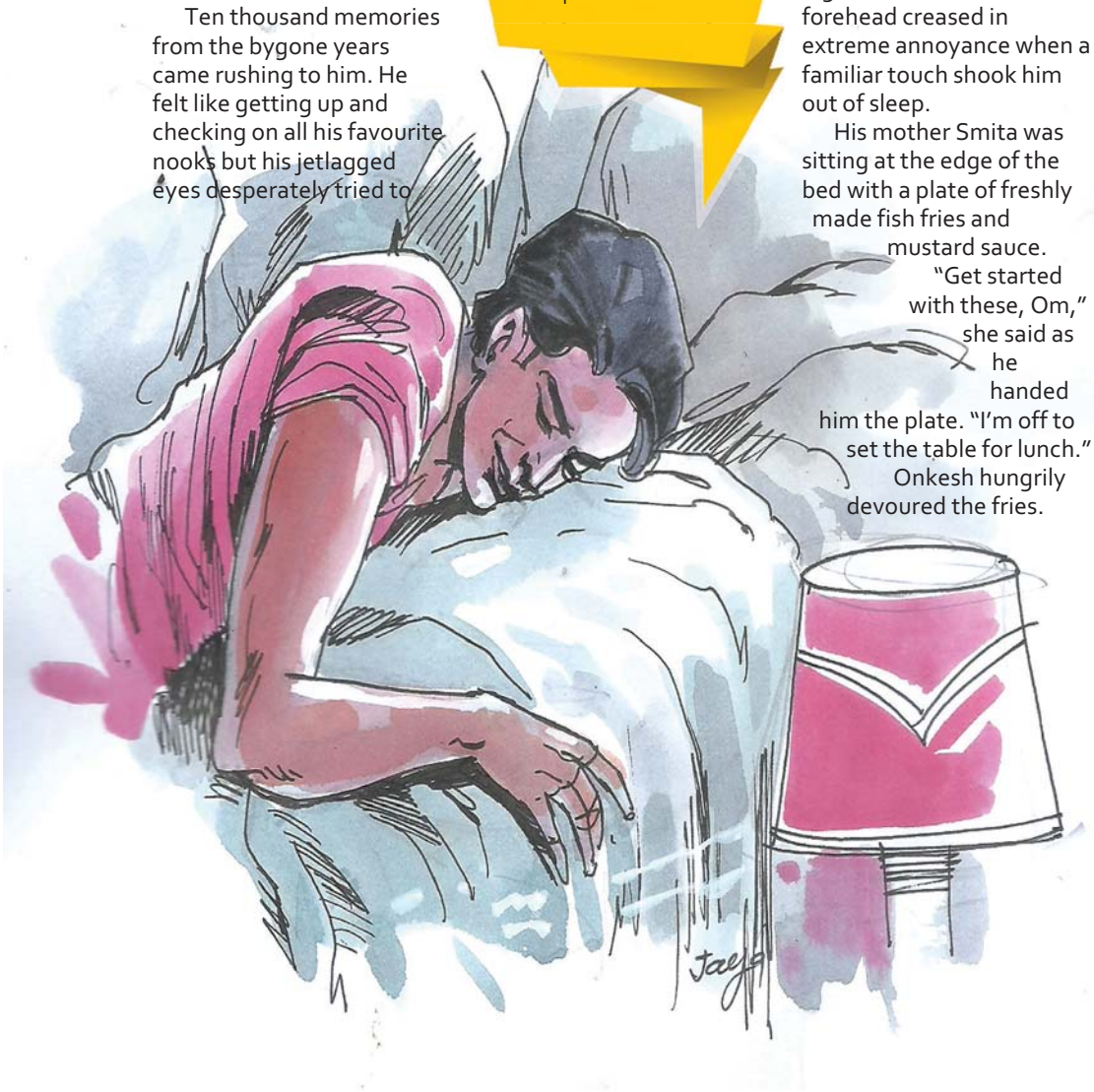
Frame of Reference

At home after years abroad. By Tanima Das

Onkesh entered his old room to see a floral bedsheet tucked in tightly at all the corners of the large wooden bed. He immediately let his tired body fall into the bed and breathed in deeply the subtle fragrance. It did not matter that he had been living abroad for 15 years. The scent of his childhood bedroom would always remain the smell of home to Onkesh.

Ten thousand memories from the bygone years came rushing to him. He felt like getting up and checking on all his favourite nooks but his jetlagged eyes desperately tried to steal a shutdown. Onkesh's thoughts idly drifted to his wife, Maya...she must be having a tough time feeding their toddler in an unfamiliar environment. A sense of guilt prevented Onkesh from falling asleep and he kept himself up by brooding on pointless ideas. He was content with the random flow of thoughts when suddenly his American boss Graham barged into his bedroom and declared Onkesh's competitor from work, David, the winner. Onkesh started a vehement protest immediately. But Graham nonchalantly handed the prize, a light brown piece of fried fish to David and said to Onkesh, "Well, you aren't white enough to digest fish." Onkesh's forehead creased in extreme annoyance when a familiar touch shook him out of sleep.

A sense of guilt prevented Onkesh from falling asleep and he kept himself up by brooding on pointless ideas.



His mother Smita was sitting at the edge of the bed with a plate of freshly made fish fries and mustard sauce. "Get started with these, Om," she said as he handed him the plate. "I'm off to set the table for lunch." Onkesh hungrily devoured the fries. Their heavenly taste contrasted with the bitterness of his last dream. He wondered how David might be using this long leave to for his benefit back in the USA. He forcibly pulled himself away from the morose chain of thoughts and waddled into the dining hall which smelled distinctly festive from the aroma of his favourite dishes.

"You are the best mummy ever," Onkesh exclaimed as he sat down to eat. Smita smiled and heaped double portions of every dish onto her son's plate.

After lunch Onkesh was planning to unpack his bag. He had a horde of gifts for his mother.

'She'd be so glad,' Onkesh happily thought to himself as he proceeded to unlock it. At this point Smita entered the room and sat on a chair facing Onkesh. One look at her face was enough to dampen his spirits. She was not going to be pleased with any of those gifts; she was expecting conversation, presumably a lengthy one.

Onkesh got up and sat down reluctantly on a tool.

"So mummy...fill me in...what have I missed so far...?" Smita described through words and animated gestures how things have been with all their relatives and friends

and other random people.

Her descriptions were all extreme. With liberal usage of superlatives she informed Onkesh that everyone around had either been too good or too bad.

Onkesh could not place a few of them and was wondering if he should ask or just play along when Smita spoke up again.

"I had expected Maya and Jojo to come with you," Smita said.

"She's spending the week with her parents, mummy; she will come to see you as well."

"Well she could have called me at least!"

"Maya's a bit guilt ridden about her folks. She couldn't visit them when her father had a surgery earlier this year..."

"Yeah...you'd obviously defend your wife," Smita almost made a face.

Onkesh immediately stopped and rushed through his brain for an alternative approach.

"Actually, mummy, I prefer her to be away for some time...that way I get to spend some time exclusively with you," he offered a new answer as soon as he found one.

Smita broke into a smile and squeezed Onkesh's cheeks.

"I know...all my friends call you mumma's boy," Smita happily flaunted the uncomfortable epithet.

"By the way...speaking of your father-in-law's surgery reminded me; your cousin Manas has been through a lot lately. Ever since Manas's father passed away, trouble doesn't seem to be leaving him."

"Oh really?" Onkesh's body language changed immediately at the mention of Manas.

Manas and Onkesh were two years apart and all the actions of Onkesh's childhood used to be compared against the benchmark that Manas had set already.

Onkesh could not help feeling victorious as his mother started to recount the misfortunes of Manas.

"You remember how your uncle and aunty have brought him up...always so reckless and unplanned about life. He lost his job within two months of losing his father. I guess he was not focusing hard enough at his office."

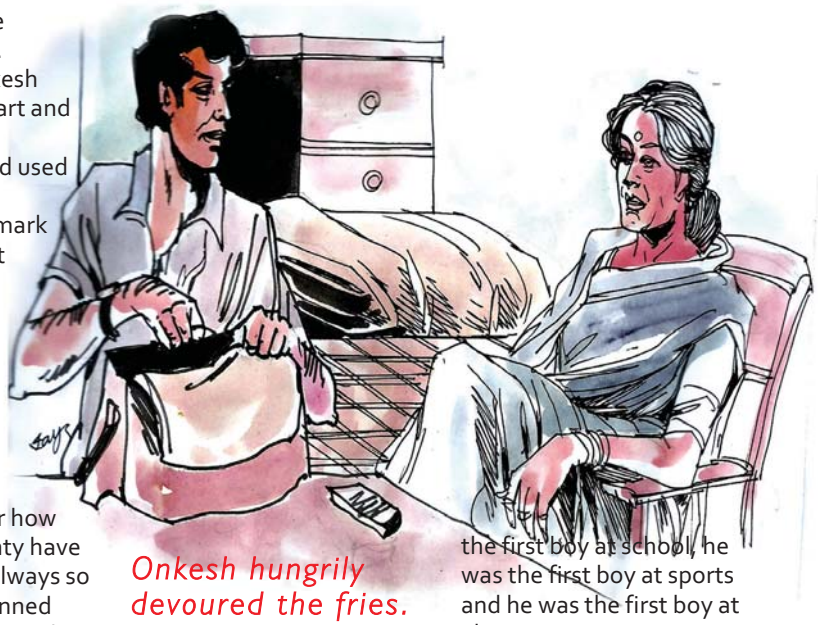
"And soon your aunty too was diagnosed with cancer and that's when the medical expenses spiralled out of hand. Eventually Manas sold off his flat and moved back into their old house. For a long time he was out of work and depended completely on his wife Ketaki's money."

"Two months ago your aunty too passed away, probably from a broken heart. What an awful way to die...to be sick and to witness the failure of her only son. Tsk tsk..."

Both Smita and Onkesh shook their heads, although both felt a subdued bout of sadistic joy.

"You should go visit Manas in the evening," Smita said suddenly. "And don't forget to mention the award from your boss."

"Which award?" Onkesh felt very uncomfortable as his recent dream lurked at the back of his mind.



Onkesh hungrily devoured the fries. Their heavenly taste contrasted with the bitterness of his last dream. He wondered how David might be using this long leave to his benefit back in the USA.

"The one that you received two months back...tell him how your work made headlines in the American newspapers. "

"Come on," said Onkesh as Smita got up to call Manas.

It turned out that Manas was free that evening and Onkesh decided to start off as soon as he could to see his cousin. As Onkesh parked himself comfortably on the seat of the Uber cab his mind started to ruffle through his growing up years.

Among all his cousins Manas was the one who lived the closest to their place. And Manas unfortunately was that one cousin who was quite a star kid in every way. He was the first boy at school, he was the first boy at sports and he was the first boy at almost every extracurricular activities that he had cared to try out. And Onkesh's parents had made it clear to him that the only way to be great was to do what Manas had already done, even better. For years Onkesh had the dubious title of being the weaker of the two cousins. It took him more than a decade of bitter struggle in foreign shores to prove it to all that Onkesh could be and was better placed than Manas.

The cab stopped in front of a stylish cafeteria and Onkesh broke out of his memory trails. He was about to protest when he saw the eatery but a known voice greeted him warmly.

With a receding hairline and a saggy belly, Manas looked at least 10 years older than Onkesh. Only the smile on his face looked the same as before.

"I got so confused by the cafeteria here," Onkesh said as he awkwardly hugged Manas.

"Well, we live upstairs and I converted the ground

floor into a cafeteria...come with me."

Onkesh followed Manas upstairs. The house had been remodeled vastly and reflected simplistic sophistication. Onkesh felt a bit disappointed to see no visible sign of hardship in the appearance of the home.

Manas turned on the lights and seated Onkesh in a sofa before going out of the main door again. He leaned against the stairs and raised his voice.

"Rony, please send two coffee latte, two plates of bacon wrapped cheese balls and one slice of classic cheesecake upstairs. "

"Hey...stop being so formal," Onkesh said as Manas came back. "I'm still feeling full...had a heavy lunch."

"You have to try out the goodies out of my kitchen. Smita aunty called me just half an hour ago to say that you are coming; else I'd have put together something elaborate with my own hands," Manas said as he let his heavy self sink into the soft couch.

"Never knew you had a thing for cooking," Onkesh said with a smile.

"I myself didn't know. How would you know? I found out a few years back only," Manas winked.

Onkesh tried to think of a chain of conversation that could contextually lead to his American achievements when Manas started to talk again.

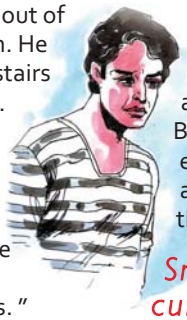
"I read about your work, it was a very proud moment for us," Manas said.

Onkesh wondered silently if Manas still could read his mind.

Aloud he said, "You did? But how?"

"Smita aunty had sent the online link. I read it out to ma as well. She was elated to hear about it. By then she was already bedridden and the news was probably the only good thing she heard before she passed away," said Manas.

Onkesh had expected Manas to berate foreign validations and he was ready with his retort about the fox and his sour grapes. But Manas's enthusiastic appreciation made that impossible and



Smita was very curious on that day. Manas and Ketaki had been dating for a while and marriage was just a natural next step for them. But this simple action had put Ketaki up for detailed inspection by all the relatives. Ketaki had a cute round face with prominent features. In her bridal attire she presented quite a beautiful picture.

Onkesh sat disappointed for a while.

When Onkesh looked again at Manas, he found him to be staring at his mother's portrait. Onkesh put his hand on Manas's shoulder. Manas sighed and managed somehow to restrict the accumulating tear drop from leaving his eyes.

"Mummy told me about uncle and aunty. I have no words to console you, Manas," Onkesh managed to say.

"It's okay now. It hurt a lot back then. And both of them left in quick succession. Good for them. They could never bear to be apart for too long."

"I'm so sorry," Onkesh said.

"No please don't be sorry. Life has also been kind to me in many ways. I'm happy with the way things are now." Manas collected himself and leaned back to rest his head on his back-folded arms.

The casual demeanor seemed to irritate Onkesh.

At this moment Rony arrived with refreshment and started to place them in front of Onkesh.

"Well mummy said that you had to give up your job or something?" Onkesh said as he flashed a warm smile of acknowledgment at Rony.

The timing was perfect. Manas was sure to feel degraded in front of his employee. Manas sat up and popped a cheese ball into his mouth.

"Gave up? I was fired, " he said as he chewed on. "Thanks, Rony...these are perfectly done."

Rony smiled and left with the tray.

Taken aback Onkesh wondered what to say next.

"Eat, Om, you used to love fried food," Manas prodded.

"They fired you?" Onkesh repeated.

"Yes, Actually it wasn't completely their fault. I never really loved my job and after the sudden demise of baba, I couldn't focus one bit in the office. So they had to replace me. I ran into debts and sold off my flat as well."

"You could have asked me for help..." Onkesh said. After a small pause he weakly added, "You still can ask."

Manas was startled for a while and then he smiled.

"You're very generous, Om. Had there been no Ketaki in my life, I would have to..."

Manas's phone rang interrupting his sentence.

He answered the call while gesturing with his free hand, an "excuse me" at Onkesh.

"Yes, he's here. Come as early as you can...you got it, dear...won't let him leave."

Manas disconnected the call and looked at Onkesh.

"Sorry...it's Ketaki. She'd be home soon," his face looked jubilant. "You know, Om...there will never be another woman like her. She has braved all storms with grit..." Manas went on praising his wife and Onkesh began to think of the first time he had met Ketaki. It was Manas and Ketaki's wedding day many winters ago.

Smita was very curious on that day. Manas and Ketaki had been dating for a while and marriage was just a natural next step for them. But this simple action had put Ketaki up for detailed inspection by all the relatives. Ketaki had a cute round face with prominent features. In her bridal attire she presented quite a beautiful picture.

"Mummy I think she is pretty, Manas has chosen well," Onkesh had commented on seeing her.

"Ah...what a fool you are. She is not beautiful. It

is the grace of youth and joy adding that charm to her appearance. Mark my words, five years from now this glow will have faded away completely."

Onkesh had looked at his mother in wonder. The woman knew all the tricks and secrets of life.

"You just focus on getting settled abroad. Give me an NRI status and I'll get you a bride who is 10 times prettier than this girl," Smita had promised to her son.

And indeed Smita had religiously scoured all matrimonial columns and websites to find out Maya, an exceedingly beautiful woman when her son had fulfilled his end of the deal.

Breaking Onkesh out of his reverie the door bell rang.

"That's Ketaki...let me go get her," Manas promptly got up and almost ran down the stairs to fetch his wife.

'This happens when you live off your wife's money,' Onkesh thought to himself sarcastically. 'Running off to welcome his wife like a loyal little puppy.'

But when Manas guided Ketaki into the living room a few moments later, the prominent swell in her midriff explained why Manas had run to her.

Ketaki flashed a warm smile at Manas before seating herself.

"There's my accomplished bro-in-law," she said. "How are you? How're Maya and Jojo?"

Onkesh carefully studied her face. His mother had been wrong. She had gotten prettier over the years.

"We are all good, Ketaki. Congratulations! I can see that you have happiness on its way," Onkesh said as he took another look at her tummy bulge.

"Yes. Finally we are going to be parents. It was a long wait for us," said Manas.

"Thanks, Om. Soon, Jojo and our baby can be what you two used to be once," Ketaki said. "By the way, tell us all about your life in the USA. We're talking about you all the time. Today we want to listen to the stories first hand!"

Onkesh lapped up the opportunity and described his superior lifestyle of luxury and comfort to Manas and Ketaki. He spoke about how much money and respect he had gotten in the USA and how it had come to become his true home now.

"Well, would you like me to look for a job for Manas?" Onkesh asked.

"Oh no...I can't take up a job now. With the baby coming, I need to be free," Manas casually explained.

"The restaurant has started to earn a small profit in the last few months. We decided that Manas should focus on the business and the baby while I focus on my job," Ketaki added.

"Oh...didn't think of that..."Onkesh said and looked away as the arrangement seemed unconvincing to him.

"You must bring Maya and Jojo for dinner the next day...it'd be a pleasant reunion for us," Ketaki suddenly said. Onkesh looked closely at the faces of Manas and Ketaki. He desperately looked for a sign of jealousy, a trace of pain or at least a hint of wistfulness. But he found none. They were happy about the way life had panned out for him. To them Onkesh was a part of them.

And in one confusing moment Onkesh felt a strong urge to hug Manas and tell him how hard it was for him to work with a racist boss and accept that there was no way out. For that one moment he became the Onkesh from decades ago who had confessed to Manas about his first heartbreak, his first cigarette, his precious dreams of being a cricketer...

But then the moment passed. Onkesh got a grip of reality and said, "I have to go home now...mummy will be waiting."

"Leaving so soon? Have dinner with us..." Ketaki begged.

"Smita aunty will wait for him...let's not delay him tonight," Manas reasoned.

"Exactly...she's cooking a year's menu! I'll try to come another day," Onkesh laughed.

"Give our regards to aunty," they both said. "I will," Onkesh promised as he left quickly before his emotions could overpower him. When Onkesh came home, Smita was watching one of her regular TV shows. "Just in time for dinner. How was it at Manas's place? How is the 'first boy' holding up? Was he very jealous?" Smita's countenance was bright with anticipation. Onkesh was staring straight ahead. His eyes looked peaceful and lacked the usual intensity. "He is as he always was mummy, he is still the first boy," Onkesh said before going in for a quick shower. We

Being Parent v/s Couple

A constant struggle for a new mother

By Samiksha Rakesh Khatri

Six months ago a small angel sent by God; entered my world, and I became a mother. I won't lie and tell you that motherhood is the best part of a woman's life, but yes the struggle is worthy. I am Mrs. Samiksha Rakesh Khatri and this is my story. Happily married and mother of one daughter, I am currently working as a principal in my own school in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. In lockdown, when I got pregnant it was a nine-month full of anxiety and happiness, the extra love, care and attention by my family and husband has made my pregnancy the most memorable time of my life.

But now it was time to face some dirty reality, I have been a working woman throughout my pregnancy, and it was difficult to stay at home without any help with child, the whole day long. All day in the house I was getting frustrated and irritated with the changed routine. Things did not become better even after rejoined the work, balancing work and motherhood was a hard cake. But the problem was not as simple as it was seen on surface, the damage was deeper.

Making the change from coupledom to parenting was exciting and wonderful, but it soon becomes exhausting and exasperating. The things were so bad that the word "Divorcé" silently peeked in.

We as a couple were missing, from the day I confirmed my pregnancy. Our life has become more of dreaming about the little life we would soon receive, and all the talks and walks of life were revolving around it. As she entered our life, our "WE" time totally vanished. I was always angry, always frustrated and it would soon be converted into depression.

The things were so bad that the word "divorce" silently peeked in. But the idea of a life without each other, made us think again.

On one blue morning I had a word with my husband so that we can find some solution to this change in our life. I think many of new mothers face the same problem and feels like side heroines in their own stories. Staying lovers while, raising kids is not easy but the good news is we can still mange by following some tips which can help you to balance your life between being a nice couple and responsible parents:

Tune in, not out

We decided not to watch television, talk about neighbours or gossip about our relatives even setting our priorities right at work, saying no to all the unnecessary social commitments and responsibilities to fill our free time (fetched with difficulties), rather we will involve more in ourselves as a couple, going for walks and long drives and knowing each other beyond a parent will be our first priority. This was a nice idea, walks and talks were the correct medicine for our problems. And this would also help us to be a good parent, as a nice soul once said that, our children will be happy with us only when we are healthy, happy and fulfilled.

We are a team

In order to create a healthier relationship both as a parent and as a couple we need to understand that parenting has to be a team effort, it will happen easily if both the parents are involved and the time which remains will become our time to love each other. Perhaps, not surprisingly mother take on the lion's share of child care small things like warming the milk, changing the diapers and clothes, taking baby for a walk could easily make mom relaxed and more lovable.

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Ask for help

This was the most beautiful lesson he made me understand, moms should not always be treated as God, sometime a mom should relax have a full glass of Beer and a bubble bath, self care and saying No are good enough, moreover, ask for help, don't be "I will do all by myself kind of momma." Family members, friends and even people can be hired to take care of baby, also getting help from your partner will also enhance his/her confidence as a parent.

Set realistic expectation!

If the mother is working, don't expect the rooms to be always clean. Clothes to be always arranged and ironed and washrooms to be always clean, remember a little dirt won't harm anyone much... but some words of appreciation will make any body's day. So, set realistic expectations which can be accomplished.

Make efforts to maintain relationships

Keep lines of communication open, lots of hugs and kisses will make the journey easy, some flowers, chocolates and cakes will make your day... both of the parents should try and make it easier for each other by sincerely appreciating the efforts both are making less of comparing and more of collaborating will surely do miracles. Moreover, adding to the list after a detail analysis I found that, we can be give happiness only when we are happy so a lot of self love and self care will also do wonders in the relationship. Remember, it is not you both against each other, it's you as a team against the problem. Competition, negativity and blaming will not make the things better only collaboration and cooperation can solve the mess and really make you enjoy the happiness of being a parent, while still being a great couple.

I hope these small tips will surely help you to, cop with double stress of married life and parenting. Beautiful relationships we hold with our soul mates are worth sharing and with some small tricks and right mind set we can reduce the stress and enjoy the wonder of being a parent, as both being partner and parent satisfy our soul in a different manner. I wish you all the very best for your journey. Please note what my husband could not suggest, a nice sex once a week will also do wonders in your relationship.....!!!!!

Do follow this tricks and tips and let me know, what were your experiences on it. We

IN-LAWS OUT-LAWS

I would like to tell my future mother-in-law

When a girl is about to get married, she has certain expectations from the home she is about to get married into and especially certain expectations from her husband and most of all from her mother-in-law.

Respect is a common feeling, what you give is the thing that you get. She anticipates that you should treat her family with a similar respect that she has for you. This is one of the most significant desires that a daughter-in-law has from her better half and his family. In the event that you approach her people with deference and love, she will give you the equivalent.

When a mother-in-law decides to get her son married, I feel she has to be prepared to make space for another person coming into the house, an additional person.

She has to be prepared to give up at least some of the control she has had on the house and her son if she wants her daughter-in-law to settle down as an integral member of her house. If a daughter-in-law wants to participate in any of the household chores, kitchen etc. Her mother-in-law has to let her do as she wants without her interference and nagging as she would let her daughter do (if she has one).

She should welcome her daughter-in-law as a daughter and not see her as a servant who has come in their house to serve and cook for them or wash their clothes or keep the house neat and clean. Yes everyone likes to keep their house neat and clean but not to be treated as a servant and all servants and helpers in the house be removed on her coming as some mother-in-laws do. (I have proof where some daughter-in-laws are suffering like this at the hands of their mother-in-laws). They are having to work as servants and plus

Also if certain changes are required to be made in the house and a daughter-in-law wishes to do things in a certain way, she is not encouraged and a mother-in-law insists of doing things her way only. No freedom is given to the daughter-in-law.

Once the daughter-in-law comes to the house she should be given dedicated place to keep her things (clothes etc). Sometimes she is not given dedicated space and has to leave her things behind in her parents house.

"Sometimes if it is a joint family the in-laws do not give space to their son and daughter-in-law and the children cannot even go out alone to have a meal or even go out for a movie.

Some alone time should be given to the couple for them to develop an understanding with each other at least in the initial months of their marriage";
says Angela Shergill, a psychotherapist and counselling psychologist.

Lastly I would like to say that a mother-in-law should look at her daughter-in-law as "My daughter-in-law is the woman my son picked to be my best friend".

– Monika Agarwal, Moradabad.

If you have had an encounter with any of your in-laws, let our readers know it. Whether it is pleasant or sour, it does not matter so long as it is interesting and illustrates human strengths and weaknesses. All accepted contributions will be paid ₹200 each. Send you contributions. duly typed or written in neat hand writing to.

IN-LAWS/OUT-LAWS
Woman's era
E-3 Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110055.
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Name:
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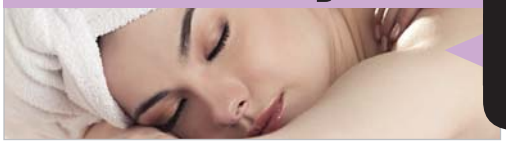
Your Body Q&A



I AM THE MOTHER OF 4-YEAR-OLD SONALI, WHO SUFFERED FROM pain, watering and reduced vision in one eye. Although she has been attended to, the foreign body has been removed, and I will bring her for refraction test, as advised. But, doctor, please explain the condition.

Nature has provided the eyes with eyelashes which are protective in nature. As soon as something strikes the eye, the eyelids close. But sometimes, something does find way to enter the eye and settle down. Inside the eye, the tears generally flush out the foreign body. But if the matter settles down on the sensitive structure cornea, it becomes painful, and the pain and discomfort will persist till remedial measures are taken.

In such a condition, it is best not to touch or rub the affected eye. Instead, keep it open, and gently rub the non-affected eye. It may seem unbelievable, but 9 out of 10 times the foreign matter will come out on its own. If, however, the stubborn thing doesn't come out, then seeking immediate professional help is a must, as otherwise the situation might get complicated resulting even in a corneal ulcer. When dust particle went inside Sonali's right eye, she closed the eye, and then suddenly realized that she could not see clearly anymore. This made you aware of the fact that Sonali's left eye was weak.

●

I AM THE GROUP-LEADER IN OUR FRIEND-CIRCLE, AND MY request to you, doctor, is to sum up different eye care issues, so that I can share the information with other members.

In order that we don't suffer from eye-strain, headache or lack of depth perception, it's imperative that the two eyes have normal vision, and the working of the external ocular muscles (which control movement of eyes), also is normal. In the absence of normal binocular vision, one eye tends to deviate outwards or inwards, resulting in squint.

Our eyes are meant to look at all distances, far and near. But the modern living pace demands too much close work and neglect of out-door activities. This abnormal near-work demand on eyes, especially in children, results in near-sightedness or myopia, wherein the child starts experiencing difficulty in seeing well at far. Heredity is also an important factor in the development of myopia. Spectacles, contact lenses, and refractive surgery are the treatments available for this refractive error.

Since progressive myopia is now assuming an epidemic form, eye care professionals have started taking specialized approach in the form of ortho-k contact lenses, specialized soft multifocal contact lenses, and/or atropine therapy. Sometimes, while a person sees well at far, there is difficulty in seeing well at near. The condition is known as hypermetropia, also called far-sightedness. Since a hyperopic eye is generally under strain, constant wearing of spectacles (with plus or convex lenses) is a must. Other treatment options are contact lenses and excimer laser. Another common refractive error is astigmatism, wherein nothing is seen clearly, and there may be distortion of shapes of objects seen. This is due to difference in the curvature of the two principal meridians of the cornea. Again, spectacles (with cylindrical lenses having power in one meridian only or a combination of sphero-cylindrical lenses as needed), contact lenses, or excimer laser can correct the anomaly.

●

I AM MRS. BANERJEE AGAIN. DOCTOR, PLEASE DISCUSS DETAILS OF children's common eye diseases.

BLEPHARITIS is a chronic inflammatory condition of the margins of the lids with redness, swelling and formation of crusts. Treatment is by removal of crusts, application of antibiotic ointment and periodic shampooing of the hair.

HORDEOLUM, or stye, is an acute inflammation at the edge of the lid, with red, painful swelling at the margin of the lid with a yellow point of pus. Treatment is by application of hot compresses, improvement in general health and correction of refractive error, if any.

CHALAZION is an enlargement of a tarsal gland in the eyelid due to the blockage of its duct, characterized by a palpable, painless, firm nodule in the lid slightly away from its margin. Treatment is by surgical incision.

ENTROPION is rolling or turning in of the margin of the lid with its lashes, resulting in pain, watering, photophobia, opacities or ulceration of the cornea. Treatment is by plastic surgery of the lid (i.e., tarsectomy).

PTOSIS is the drooping of the upper lid, resulting in visual disturbance and narrow palpebral aperture with the upper lid covering more of the cornea. Treatment is by surgery which may be postponed until the child attains the age of 5 years if the drooping is not interfering with vision.

In cases, the oculo-plastic surgeon decides against surgery, Ptosis Spectacles effectively lift the drooping upper lid.Other diseases of the lids in children may be traumatic in nature i.e. ECCYMOSIS, or black eye, causing disfigurement, INSECT-BITE resulting in lid-swelling, INCISED WOUNDS requiring stitches, and BURNS requiring thorough cleaning, removal of dead epithelium and dressing with antibiotic ointment.

DACRYOCYSTITIS is an inflammation of the lacrimal sac, and characterized by regurgitation of mucoid fluid, on pressure, and watering. Treatment is by frequent expression of the sac by gentle pressure to empty the muco-pus followed by instillation of antibiotic drops. Syringing and probing of the naso-lacrimal duct under general anesthesia may be required if this measure does not improve the condition.

– Dr Narendra Kumar

I AM A 35 YRS OLD WORKING WOMAN, SINCE LAST SIX MONTHS I am suffering from itching, small fruncles filled with pus, honey coloured crusts that when removed leave denuded red areas, ulceration and scar formation on my face and other exposed parts of body.

I have consulted a skin specialist for this problem, after examination he told me that you are suffering from weeping or encrusted lesions called impetigo. Doctor advise me treatment. I got relief after medication but it has not cured completely. I want your opinion about the disease.

Impetigo is a contagious and autoinoculable infection of the skin caused by staphylococci or streptococci (or both), classically, two forms have been recognized, a vesiculopustular type, with thick golden crusted lesions caused by staphylococus aureus or group A beta hemolytic streptococcus and a bullous type, associated with phage group II S aureus, However, most cases of impetigo of either presentation now appear to be due to staphylococci. Itching is the only symptom.

The lesions consist of macule, vesicles, bullae, pustules (small fruncles type lesions filled with pus) and honey coloured gummy crusts that when removed leave denuded red areas. The face and other exposed parts are most often involved. Ecthyma is a deeper form of impetigo caused by staphylococci or streptococci, with ulceration and scarring. It occurs frequently on the legs and other covered areas. Gram stain and culture confirm the diagnosis. Topical antibiotics are not as effective as systemic antibiotics.

Two percent mupirocin ointment dispensed as 15 gm and used three times daily for 10 days, may be effective for limited disease. If the affected area is large or if there is fever or toxicity or if there is any concern that a nephritogenic strain of streptococcus may be causative, systemic antibiotics should be given.

Broad spectrum antibiotic orally is usually effective. Recurrent impetigo is associated with nasal carriage of S aureus, treated with rifampin 600 mg daily or intranasal mupirocin 2 percent ointment twice daily for 5 days. Crusts and weepy areas may be treated with compresses and wash cloths and towels must be segregated and washed separately but any treatment should be taken by the consultation of a doctor.

●

I AM A 28 YRS OLD WORKING WOMAN, I HAVE A THREE MONTHS old daughter, this is my first child. I want to know about the growth and development pattern of a child.

Growth and development of Children is a continuous and orderly process. But sequence of growth is not always uniform. The increments in growth over a unit of time are not always regular or equal.

Growth pattern of every individual is unique but the general pattern of growth in human beings is predictable. Different tissues of the body grow at different rates. General body growth is rapid during the fetal life, first 3 to 4 years of life and also during puberty.

In the intervening years of mid childhood, the somatic growth velocity is relatively slower.

The brain grows rapidly during the latter months of fetal life and early months of postnatal life. At birth, the head size is about 65 to 70 percent of the anticipated head size in adults.

It reaches 80 to 90 percent of the adult head size by the age of 2 years. Gonadal growth is dormant during childhood. It becomes pronounced during pubescence.

The growth of lymphoid tissue is most pronounced during mid childhood. During this period, the lymphoid tissue is overgrown and its mass is often more than that in the fully mature adult. Children between 4 and 8 years of age often have hypertrophied tonsils and large lymph nodes.

●

I AM A 50 YRS OLD WORKING WOMAN AND DIABETIC SINCE LAST four to five years. I want to know about the primary prevention of the disease.

Primary prevention consists of genetic counselling, most authors today believe that diabetes is an inherited disease and the inheritance is polygenic. It should be told that if both the parents are diabetic, the probability is that about 10 percent of their children may develop diabetes at some stage in life.

The risk is about 5 percent if only one parent is affected. There is strong evidence that obesity leads to diabetes. Between 70 and 90 percent of diagnosed diabetics are estimated to have a history of obesity. On the basis of present knowledge.

It remains advisable to urge persons with an inherited tendency towards diabetes to avoid overeating and to maintain normal weight, other risk factors advice regarding diet, exercise and maintenance of normal body weight should be given to those with impaired glucose tolerance.

Epidemiological surveys have suggested that high fibre diets reduce the frequency of diabetes mellitus but no causal relationship has been established.

Diabetics are advised to exercise. But it has not yet been possible to answer the key question whether regular physical exercise prolong life and reduces morbidity in the diabetic.

Subjects at risk should avoid diabetegenic drugs like oral contraceptives. It is wise to reduce factors that promote atherosclerosis i.e. smoking, high blood pressure, high serum cholesterol and high triglyceride levels.

Alcohol can indirectly increase the risk of diabetes and therefore should be avoided.

– Dr Sanjay Teotia.

Readers are invited to send in any health and medical queries they would like to be answered. *Woman's Era* will provide answers to your questions and offer solutions to your problems. Individual replies cannot be sent. Address your letters (neatly written on white paper) to:

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Make Money!

Work better for the family. By Sujatha Rao

During the late nineties, a middle-aged couple walked into our bank branch one fine morning. The man informed me that his wife had recently come into some inherited money from her parents. He went on to say that he wanted to park the money temporarily in some good investment products. While he was talking, his wife looked nervous, edgy, and was silent throughout. Finally, a decision was made by the husband to park it temporarily into a Fixed Deposit for a period of six months.

As I was filling in the relevant forms, the husband asked his wife for the cheque book. His wife promptly took it out of her bag and handed it over to her husband. As he cut out a cheque leaf, I politely offered to fill in that one too. Declining my offer, he filled it in himself and pushed it towards the wife to obtain her signature.

Handing over the signed cheque leaf to me he said, "My wife is a graduate, but she is all thumbs when it relates to any kind of financial matter."

From the corner of my eyes, I could see the embarrassment and distress on the woman's face. I turned with a smile towards the lady and said, "It's okay Madam. Even I hardly knew any of these matters a few years ago. We are here to help you. Don't worry."

Unfortunately, I was witness to the same lady walking into the branch as a widow in a couple of years, close on the heels of her grown-up son, her absolute helplessness writ all over her face. A similar scene repeated yet again, this time with the son taking the place of his father.

Sitting on the other side of the various desks in the Bank, in a career spanning across two and half decades, I came across many people, especially women, getting overwhelmed when it came to taking serious decisions about their financial matters.

There have been quite a few cases of such hapless women being cheated of their inherited assets by their own kith and kin majorly on account of their total lack of knowledge about the financial matters.

Right from filling in the application form to making sense of the myriads of financial products comes across as a daunting task for people from all walks of life. Despite the best efforts at simplification of many a matter over the years, both from the regulatory authorities and the Banks, the KYC procedures, the number of pages (though reduced considerably now) in the application forms and the mandatory regulatory declarations still seem to unnerve even an educated customer.

In this regard, the system also is somewhat helpless as too much simplification is fraught with risks as all financial systems continue to be vulnerable to frauds of various kinds.

THE PACE AT WHICH THE GROWTH HAS HAPPENED LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED. ACCORDING TO A REPORT ON FINANCIAL LITERACY AND INCLUSION IN INDIA BY THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION, IN 2019 ONLY 24 PERCENT OF RURAL AND 33 PERCENT URBAN INDIANS HAPPEN TO BE FINANCIALLY LITERATE. OUT OF THIS, THE FEMALE GENDER ACCOUNTS FOR AN EVEN LOWER 21 PERCENT.

Having witnessed how traumatic the situation could be for a large section of people who were always at the mercy of someone in the family for carrying out the simplest of financial transactions, I feel it is time we focused on improving this situation for the better. Of course, over the last decade, things definitely have moved in a positive direction. But the pace at which the growth has happened/is happening leaves much to be desired, especially in respect of women managing their own finances.

According to a report on Financial Literacy and Inclusion in India by the National Centre for Financial Education, in 2019 only 24 percent of rural and 33 percent urban Indians happen to be financially literate. Out of this, the female gender accounts for an even lower 21 percent.

The following table details it out further in terms of the age-wise distribution of the said data. From this data, one can gather that across all the age groups, the percentage doesn't go beyond 30%.

Financial Literacy

By Location	Rural	Urban	All India
	24%	33%	27%

By Gender	Male	Female	All india
	29%	21%	27%

By Age Group	All india
18-29	30%
30-49	27%
50-59	25%
60-69	23%
70-80	27%

Source: Financial Literacy and Inclusion in India Survey Report 2019

This compares very poorly with the overall "Literacy Rate of India in 2020" which stood at 77.7%. It's time we attempted to bridge this gap between "General Literary" and "Financial Literacy" by educating people about the latter right from a very young age.

In this connection, it is very encouraging to note that RBI is planning to introduce financial education in the school curriculum through its national strategy for financial education 2020-2025. The challenge however is the fact that "financial literacy" is not only about "knowing" but it's more about "practicing."

It's a skill that needs to be built over the long term through practical experience. Such a skill-building exercise can perhaps be better handled through developing interactive games on relevant topics as that might stand a greater chance of adaptability with the current techno-savvy generation.

It is heartening to see women making significant strides in terms of breaking the stereotypes by getting into careers in those fields which were hitherto considered belonging to male bastions. However, when it comes to managing their financial matters, I feel the same visible progress is found to be still falling short.

Since this helplessness is more severe amongst women than in men, the following simple tips are being listed out mainly aimed at women who remain uninitiated in this field, for overcoming the challenge slowly and steadily:

Take charge

As the clichéd saying goes, "thought is the beginning of any action." Women are great at managing their daily household finances and accounts. By deciding to change their attitude and thinking process towards managing their bank accounts and investments, they would be able to kick start their financial journey outside of their homes too.

THE SAME WAY WOMEN LEARNED TO TEXT, WHATSAPP, NAVIGATE THE INTERNET; THEY CAN LEARN THE NUANCES OF DIGITAL BANKING TOO WITH EASE. BY GOING THROUGH THE DEMOS READILY AVAILABLE ON MOBILE BANKING APPS, THEY CAN VERY EASILY LEARN TO NAVIGATE THESE.

Go digital

For carrying out banking transactions, we need not even step out of our houses these days. The same way women learned to text, Whatsapp, navigate the internet; they can learn the nuances of digital banking too with ease. By going through the demos readily available on mobile banking apps, they can very easily learn to navigate these.

At the same time, they need to understand the risks associated with cyber crime too.

I have heard it said many a time that people stay away from going digital as they are terrified of the risks involved therein. However, even manual banking is fraught with its risks. If we are prudent enough to follow safe banking norms such as; never sharing our passwords and PINs with anyone; avoiding public internet cafes, not responding to spam messages, etc., we can by and large safeguard our hard-earned money without falling a victim to cyber crime attempts.

Initiate baby-steps

For starters, women ought to aim at taking up very small online activities. If they are not comfortable, let them not transact on online banking platforms initially. Simply observing the screens and learning to navigate the system first will give them a sense of comfort over a period. Once they gain confidence, they may want to transact with very small amounts. Many of them might already be habituated to using the Debit card for their cash withdrawal needs. They can slowly learn to use the same for online payments too.

They may even want to start with bill payments online if they have not been doing the same earlier. These are very small amounts and many an online platform allows the bills to be uploaded automatically after their online registration. This way, they don't have to remember the due dates.

Understand investments

Many a woman suffers from deep-rooted investment inertia. This may result into large amounts lying in their savings accounts, earning a meager interest rate of less than 4% p.a.

When asked, a few of my friends expressed their interest to earn a better rate of return, but each of them kept postponing the decision to start that Recurring Deposit with the Bank or that SIP in a Mutual Fund.

Some women were convinced about earning very good returns from chit funds being run by someone known to them. These women withdrew certain amount in cash every month from their savings accounts towards their monthly payments to these chit funds. Both deposits into and withdrawals from these chit funds happened only in cash as the said chit funds were not registered anywhere. In this way, the account for money in their savings account was being routed through unaccounted for channels and their entire amount of investment ran a very high risk of not being protected.

It wasn't that they understood the intricacies of how the chit fund installment amounts were getting computed or even what the rate of return on their investment was. Even then these women seemed to prefer this investment, in their desire to maximize their rate of return, to the safer and more secure investments in Banks or Markets which are under the scrutiny of so many regulators.

It's prudent to begin the investments through regulated channels with a proven track record. For this to happen, people have to invest time in understanding the product they are about to put their money into. 'Knowledge' in this regard is power. If they are not inclined towards doing so, they may want to seek professional help at a fee for reaping the benefits in the long term.

In the ultimate reckoning, our money matters and irrespective of gender, we should all strive towards making it work better for us. But, if the women are nudged towards greater independence in handling their own financial matters, it would serve the entire family better in the long run. We

Gullible Hubby

I was travelling with my husband by train from Visakhapatnam to Thiruvananthapuram. It was our first journey after we got married.

We had booked our seats in the first-class compartment and it was worth every penny. The journey was enjoyable, the other people who were travelling with us were also very cheerful and friendly. We were talking and discussing about topics. The journey was going very well. I was busy listening to songs on my phone.

Around 8 am, the train halted at the crowded junction of Vijayawada. We were very hungry. My husband was about to go to the station to buy some food but then only, few people came in. They told us, that they were pantry workers and were here to take orders. We ordered the food, including some snacks and coffee, and offered them money, but they told us to pay when we receive the order. This built our confidence into them. There was no reason to suspect them. One of them, who was taking orders from us, asked if we had a change of rupees 500. My husband took out his wallet without any second thought, gave him the change and took a 500 rupee note from him. After a while, he came back and said that the note, he gave to us was not in a good condition, as it was torn, he will replace it with a new one. This time there was a point to doubt, but as we believed that he was a pantry worker, my husband gave him the note without suspecting his intention. We were very hungry and were waiting for our orders to come but even after the train left the Vijayawada station, neither the orders were supplied nor the money was returned. After waiting for a while, my husband decided to check with the coach attendant, and when he told us the truth it surprised us. There was no pantry car that was attached to the train and we realized that we had been befooled.

– V.V. Ramani

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If you have, at an time, been taken in by a smooth-talking trickster or a clever impostor, share your experience with our readers. Contributions should be about 500 words typed or neatly written on one side of the paper only. ₹200 will be paid for each accepted and published reminiscence. Send it to:
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EROTOMANIA

A one-sided love fantasy.

By Shivani Naghnoor

Erotomania is a delusional belief where a person thinks another person is in love with him or her, even though the situation is obviously not true. It could be considered as be a one sided love fantasy. The affected person is of the view that someone who they find attractive, is in love with them. In some cases, the person considered striking is a celebrity or esteemed professional such as journalist, businessman or any big influencer.

A person with erotomania just assumes the other person is in love with them, and in some cases despite not even having met the person of their dreams. The scientific term for erotomania is *De Clerambault syndrome,* named after the scientist who first discovered the condition as a distinct disorder, in the year 1921.

We have fantasised about highly professional people and celebrities or people in general. However, the thought of idolising them to an extent of thinking that they may be paying attention to us, does seem bizarre. Most of the time, we are busy focusing on our lives with very little time to think about something as vague as esteemed people having a crush on us. It is important to remember that erotomania does exist and what causes this condition.

Causes of erotomania

Erotomania is a psychiatric illness, and the affected person could be suffering from a major depressive disorder with symptoms of psychosis, such as Alzheimer's disease or bipolar disorder. They could even be diagnosed with a schizoaffective disorder or schizophrenia.

A person who suffers from extreme stress or trauma could also suffer from erotomania

The advancement of social media sites has resulted in increased access to stalk highly eminent people and celebrities.

How to really know if a person has erotomania, watch out for the symptoms?

Symptoms of erotomania

The person will stalk or browse through media about celebrities, someone they know, or notable persons of their interest.

They will go out of their way to try and get the contact number of the person they visualise.

They may frequently send intimate messages, flowers or gifts to the other person.

While watching television or browsing through the phone/internet, the affected person becomes certain that the person they admire, has eyes on him or her through media.

They feel jealous when they see their celebrity crush with someone else.

They may even step into the property premises of their so-called idol and stalk or harass them.

Difference between psychotic break and mental breakdown

A common symptom in a person suffering from erotomania is psychotic breaks. The affected person will experience paranoia, visual hallucinations; they will hear voices and have delusional thoughts. When someone encounters a psychotic break, it means they are suffering from a more severe form of depression, bipolar disorder or anxiety. Other conditions that can cause psychosis are

drug and alcohol abuse, stroke, brain infections and brain tumours.

It is important to remember that a psychotic break is different from mental breakdown. A mental breakdown happens when a person suffers from excessive stress, anxiety and burnout, and the symptoms here are feelings of intense sadness, guilt and hopelessness, fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, thoughts of self-harm or suicide, mood swings, no interest in day-to-day life and activities once enjoyed. In this case, the person does not suffer from extreme hallucinations that could indicate symptoms of schizophrenia.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT A PSYCHOTIC BREAK IS DIFFERENT FROM MENTAL BREAKDOWN. A MENTAL BREAKDOWN HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS FROM EXCESSIVE STRESS, ANXIETY AND BURNOUT, AND THE SYMPTOMS HERE ARE FEELINGS OF INTENSE SADNESS, GUILT AND HOPELESSNESS.

Cases of erotomania

When we read about erotomania, or know someone who has the condition, we probably think of it as something uncanny that cannot happen. It is imperative to know that erotomania does exist. There have been cases where fans stalk celebrities with the belief that they are in love with them. The celebrities who were stalked by fans with erotomania are Selena Quintanilla Perez, David Letterman and Jodie Foster. These are just few of the many celebrities.

Treatment and offering care and support

The effective treatment for erotomania is a combination of antipsychotic medication and talk therapy. The patient might even require hospitalisation because of the delusions and hallucinations experienced. The affected person is extremely convinced that the person of their dreams loves them back. They are certain that a notable person or someone who they really think a lot about, has

feelings for them, and in certain scenarios even after not having met that person. Such a kind of false love fantasy can result in severe mental symptoms, requiring immediate hospitalisation.

If you know someone who exhibits symptoms similar to erotomania, do not consider him or her to be mentally ill, and don't have the notion that the affected person is weird. It is crucial to show empathy, speak to him or her, and offer some space. It is possible that the person could have deep feelings of jealousy or lack of self-esteem that result in fantasy thoughts, thereby triggering erotomania. They just need a little bit of care and understanding.

Spend time with the affected person, take him or her to a coffee shop, crack a few jokes.

Head to the mall, find out the taste pattern of the affected person, and praise him or her for having a good taste.

Evaluate the positive traits of the affected person and praise him or her for their talent.

Explain to the affected person that they are worthy and can find a good partner, settle down and have a wonderful life.

Make it clear that everyone has their positive and negative points, and there will be someone who admires the affected person.

Erotomania, if caught early, can result in prevention of the condition. However, if not treated at the right time, it can be detrimental to the health of the patient.

It is necessary to promote awareness on the psychiatric condition. In this way, there will be more empathy than negative labelling. It is not common that one hears of erotomania or the condition of one-sided love for a known person, notable person or celebrity. It will just be effective if people show lots of care and concern. As mentioned earlier, if this condition is tackled at an early stage, it can result in a healthier and happier society. We

Good lesson

It was the year 1980. I was teaching in a famous school in Chennai. I lived in a very protected atmosphere with my parents around to look after my kids. Life was smooth and I enjoyed my work. My kids studied in the same school and had the best of education. My husband, who was a banker, was sent to Mumbai (then Bombay) on promotion. Suddenly my calm, settled life was shaken. I was very tempted to dissuade him from going, but it was a matter of one's career. It was time to shift to Mumbai. I was just 29 years old and was nervous about facing a new school a new city with western culture, compared to the more traditional Chennai in early 80s. I went to give a demonstration lesson in physics for std IX in one of the top schools in the city. The main attraction of this job was that teachers' children didn't have to pay tuition fees which was pretty high. The school was modern, the principal looked smart with her bobbed hair and western clothes, the teachers spoke fluently in English with an accent and the students were from elite families, those of industrialists and film stars. My heart was in my mouth but I pretended to be very calm. The students appeared to be very bold and the principal sat down at the back of the class to observe my lesson. The Physics coordinator was also with her.

As I started teaching, my nervousness disappeared, I became oblivious of the two adults sitting at the back, watching my every move, and the lesson went on for 45 minutes. When I finished, to my surprise, the kids got up and started clapping. There was a big smile on the principal's face.

She told me to meet her in her office. When I entered the room, she got up from her seat and hugged me. She was all praises for my teaching, and my knack of simplifying complex concepts. I was surprised at the keenness with which she had observed my lesson. She remarked about the content of the lesson and my capacity to capture the attention of the students. Then, she paid me the biggest compliment of my life which I shall cherish as the best encomium ever paid to me. She said, "I don't want to elaborate but I can tell you that if I had had a teacher like you in my student days, I would have loved physics. Welcome to J.B. Petit High School."

My association with her and the school continued for 20 long years. I became the head of the science department and sat at the back of the class room, observing demonstration lessons given by the newcomers. Years have passed but memories linger. This is one of the most memorable incidents of my life which gave me the impetus to contribute my best to teaching for 30 years of my life.

– Bhanu Chandran, Chennai.

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Has something happened in your life that has left an indelible impression on your mind? Some experience that gladdens your heart or which makes you shudder with pain or embarrassment even after years! Why not share it with the readers of Woman's Era? All published incidents will be paid ₹ 200. Send your entries to:

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I am Pregnant Q&A

THIS IS MY FIRST CONCEPTION. AS MY TIME DRAWS NEAR, MY fears are getting compounded as people have told me that small women have a small pelvis and this makes it difficult for the baby to pass through. As a result there are increased chances of cesarean delivery. I do want to deliver normally.

This is a blanket statement and not entirely true. A lot depends upon the size of the baby for the space available in the pelvis should be adequate in relation to the baby you are carrying.

If the size of your baby too is small, the small pelvis will not be an impediment to delivery and you may very well have a normal delivery.

However, one must remember that CPD – cephalo-pelvic disproportion – difficulty of the baby's head to pass through a narrow pelvis, is not the only reason for cesarean section.

Quite a few tall women with an adequate pelvis end up in a cesarean section for a multitude of other reasons like fetal distress, breech presentation (baby is bottom first) etc.

●

I AM EIGHT MONTHS PREGNANT AND HAVE DEVELOPED SWELLING around my ankles and feet. What is it due to and what should be done to prevent it?

Swelling, or edema, is a very common discomfort of pregnancy. When the weather is warm, or you have been standing on your feet for awhile, or even by the end of your day, you may notice that your feet feel tight and swollen. In general swelling is nothing to be alarmed about.

The swelling usually subsides after a good night's rest. Increase your intake of water to at least eight glasses of water a day.

While people believe that swelling is caused by excessive intake of salt in the diet, the opposite is also true so, moderation is the key to balance. To reduce the swelling you should wear comfortable shoes, slip on types are best. Put your feet up when possible. If you stand at work, try to move around slightly or get a stool to prop a foot up. Don't wear elastic topped socks; try support stockings.

If the swelling is accompanied by increased blood pressure and albumin in the urine, it is not normal and needs medical management.

●

I SMOKED TILL I WAS THREE MONTHS PREGNANT AS I DID NOT know that I was pregnant. Now I have tried stopping but when I don't smoke I become very irritable and moody which makes things unpleasant at home. I take a few drags now and then but do not smoke as I used to do. Will this affect my baby?

Not only smoking is harmful to your baby, but being around people who smoke is also bad, if not worse for the nicotine is passed on to the baby as carbon monoxides.

The risks of smoking to the baby include stillbirths, prematurity, low birth weight, asthma and sudden infant death syndrome. Ideally you should give up the habit before you get pregnant but if that has not occurred do so now, no matter how irritable or moody you have become. Take professional help if needed to do so.

●

I AM IN THE EIGHTH MONTH OF MY PREGNANCY AND THE baby's movements have decreased considerably over the last week. Is this a cause for concern?

It is indeed a cause for concern. You should visit your doctor at the earliest. She will perform a check up, hear the fetal heart and get an NST done.

NST is a simple, non-invasive test that gives a fair idea about the baby's well being. If this is normal you will be sent home and asked to keep a kick count. This entails counting the baby's movements for one hour after every meal. If there are 3-4 movements each time all is well.

If the NST is abnormal or inconclusive further surveillance is required. An ultrasound with a BPS (biophysical score) will be done where the baby gets a score out of 10. Sometimes you do not perceive the movements but they are well visualized on an ultrasound and you may be sent home after being reassured.

On the other hand if the BPS is poor will be admitted and strict monitoring done if the baby is premature so that it can grow big enough to survive outside the womb.

●

I USUALLY HAVE DELAYED PERIOD AND DID NOT REALISE THAT I was pregnant when I got a X ray of my tooth done for some dental problem. I do want to continue with this pregnancy but do not know if it is wise to do so after the exposure to X rays. Please advise.

Inadvertent exposure to X ray, during pregnancy, especially in an area remote from the uterus (the tooth in your case) is relatively harmless so do not panic or think of an abortion on this account. One X Ray exposure does not warrant such a drastic step.

– Dr Amrinder Kaur Bajaj, MD

Readers are invited to send in any health and medical queries they would like to be answered. *Woman's Era* will provide answers to your questions and offer solutions to your problems. Individual replies cannot be sent. Address your letters (neatly written on white paper) to:

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Short Story

The Solution

The problem seemed intractable. By M. Sarada

He jammed on the brakes and brought the car to a grinding halt inches away from the young girl who was lying face down on the road.

The day had dawned and everything looked fresh, calm and beautiful. Bhaskar smiled as he drove his maroon Tata Sumo a little too fast along the almost deserted road. He loved driving in the early mornings as that was the only time he could drive fast while he thought contently about his doting wife and lovely daughter. His long overdue promotion had also materialised. His cup was full. Life was indeed beautiful. He smiled and began to whistle his favourite tune.

Suddenly he saw a young girl jump onto the path of his speeding car. He jammed on the brakes and brought the car to a grinding halt inches away from the young girl who was lying face down on the road. The loud screech of the tires shattered the silence of the morning, sending cats and dogs running helter-skelter, and birds scattering away into the air. He jumped out of his car and approached the girl who was staring at the bumper of the car. She was very young, perhaps around 16 years, extremely fair, very thin and definitely very pretty. She slowly sat up as though she was in her bedroom and had just woken up from a good night's sleep.

Suddenly he saw a young girl jump onto the path of his speeding car. He jammed on the brakes and brought the car to a grinding halt inches away from the young girl who was lying face down on the road.

Gritting his teeth and swearing under his breath, he grabbed her arm and pulled her up roughly. "Was that an attempt at suicide?" He barked, shaking her furiously. She gave him a lazy look and started to pat away the dust from her clothes and body. "Why pick my car?" he thundered, infuriated by her indifference.

"Well, it was the first big car that came along after I took the decision. Didn't know it was yours! As if it matters," the girl snapped trying to free her arm from the man's iron grip. "Let go of my arm! Are you trying to break it? Can't you see it is too thin for rough handling?"

Bhaskar stared unbelievingly at the young girl. What impudence, he thought. "Very funny," he roared. "What am I

supposed to do? Laugh and give you a pat?"

"Nothing has happened! Will you stop screaming into my ear?" She covered her ears and looked up at him, "I don't like noise. It hurts my ears." She shook herself free and shook her head. "Failed again," she said softly.

"O, so this is your hobby! I will teach you to jump in front of my car," he raised his hand and slapped her across her face. The strike sent her flying. Covering both her cheeks with her hands, she stared at the man incredulously. Then the tears began to roll down her cheeks. It was more of shock than sadness. Bhaskar suddenly noticed that people had started to gather. He pulled up the girl and shoved her into the front seat of his car and got in. Within seconds the car was on the road again travelling at a neat 70 kmph. He turned to look at the girl. She was crying softly, her face covered with her *dupatta*. She looked so pathetic that Bhaskar suddenly felt sorry. Had he been too harsh? He turned his gaze towards the road and continued to drive fast.

"Where are we going?" she asked after some time, wiping away the tears that kept rolling down her cheeks.

"To the police station," he said calmly.

"Police station?" But why?' She suddenly came alive and alert.

"You jumped in front of my car to commit suicide. Don't you know that suicide is an offence? Whatever problem you have, you'll feel better if you spend some time in prison." The girl stared at Bhaskar. She could not believe what she was hearing.

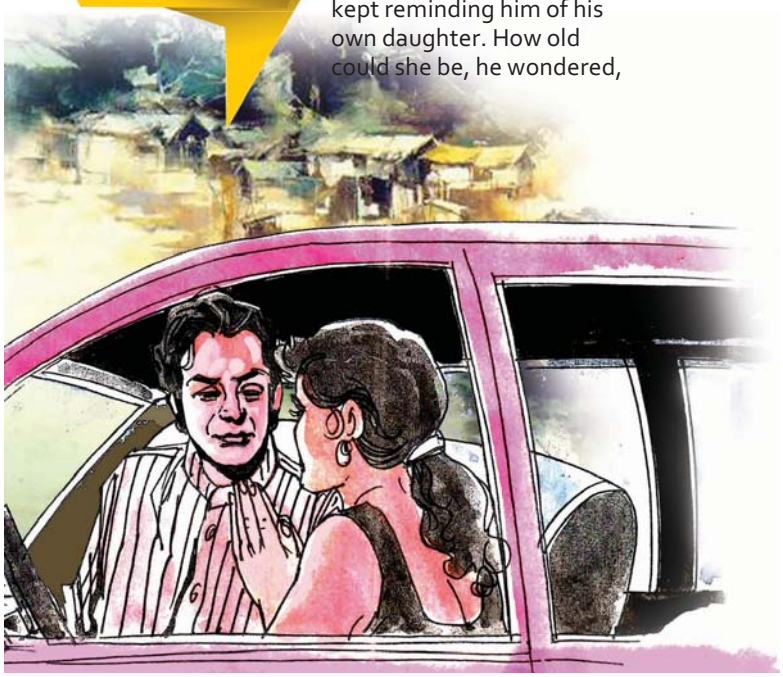
"Nothing has happened. Why are you making it an issue?"

"Oh nothing has happened! What a tragedy!" he sneered. "Do you know what would have happened to me if I had knocked you down? A big crowd would have gathered. They would look at you and say, Oh the poor child. She looks so thin and helpless." Giving you first aid or taking you to hospital would not have been their priority. Instead they would grab me, call me names, and, after a free-for-all, take me to the police station half dead. Then the police would remove my clothes and throw me into jail. It will become sensational news and by the time I prove my innocence and come out, my life would be over."

He stared at her. He began to wonder if she had a psychological problem. His anger evaporated and he suddenly felt a little concerned. He decided that he should find out why she threw herself in front of his car. He smiled at her, "You little minx, you have really prepared yourself for all consequences, haven't you?"

"Oh stop over dramatising. You think I will stand by and agree to all the accusations you make and let them quietly take me away? You got the wrong person! I will fight tooth and nail and tell them a different story. You want to hear it?" Well here goes,

After a long pause, she turned to him and spoke very softly. "Please let me go. I promise I won't do it again." He noticed that she was still crying.



"I was walking quietly on the road and this man came speeding along in that monster car of his and almost killed me. I had to jump into the paddy fields to save my life." She turned towards him and smiled. "Anyway, they are not going to believe either of us because there is not even a scratch mark on me. Congratulations! You are a king with the brake."

He stared at her. He began to wonder if she had a psychological problem. His anger evaporated and he suddenly felt a little concerned. He decided that he should find out why she threw herself in front of his car. He smiled at her, "You little minx, you have really prepared yourself for all consequences, haven't you?" She shrugged and looked away .They both remained silent for a long time. She looked so unhappy and so different from his light-hearted, confident and easy-going daughter. Somehow, she kept reminding him of his own daughter. How old could she be, he wondered, as old as his little girl who was 16? Could be one or two years older, he decided. It was an age when girls are carefree and full of fun. What would have made this one take such a drastic step at such a young age?

After a long pause, she turned to him and spoke very softly. "Please let me go. I promise I won't do it again." He noticed that she was still crying. The tears kept running down her cheeks which she kept

wiping away with the back of her hand. She had large beautiful eyes. He suddenly felt very sorry for her. There was something very wrong in her life. He wanted to find out what it was and find a solution for it. When he spoke again his voice was very soft. "Why?"

"Why what?" she asked.

"Why did you do it?" he enquired again and waited patiently for her reply.

She shrugged. "What is life when there is no love and hope?" Bhaskar raised his eyebrows. He couldn't help smiling. "A 16-year-old has parents and siblings to love and to be loved, old frustrated lady."

He stopped the car and turned towards her.

"I too have a daughter like you. She is so full of life. At your age, there will be a lot of expectations. You should have a goal and strive to achieve it. Not jump in the path of every car that comes your way."

She was quiet for a long time, staring at her hands.

"Yes. If my dad had been alive, my life too would have been such." The tears were uncontrollable now.

"Would you like to tell me? What happened to your dad?"

Jhansi shook her head. "There is no point. My grandma and a lot of other people have tried."

She took her time to reply. "He died in a car accident. Six months ago. Dad promised to take us to my favourite movie." She swallowed and tried to hold back the tears that were almost choking her. "He called to say that he would not be able to make it as he had a lot of commitments. But I insisted he come. And I actually told him that I would not enter the theatre if we were late!" "She has hated me since. Before my dad died, he held my hand and told me to look after mom. He should have said that to mom not to me." "Fortunately, my grandmother was living with us. She took care of me. She passed away last month. Losing her has been terribly painful. It has left a void in my life. I cannot survive or face life without my dad and grandmother, especially since I have lost my mother's love as well." She was crying uncontrollably now. "I know it has been a shock for mom. But how can she punish me for something for which I was not responsible? I have lost my father! Isn't my loss enormous as well? Yes, her life is shattered, as grandma says. But why can't she see that my life is also shattered? I need her more than ever now but she hardly talks to me but keeps shouting at me especially when things go wrong." She slights and ignores me. We have been living in the same house for the past seven months like strangers."

There was a long silence as both sat still and stared into space. When she started talking again, her voice was almost a whisper as though she was talking to herself. Bhaskar had to lean forward to grasp what she was saying.

"Life is beautiful, they say. I agree. I too want to live and enjoy the beauty of this wonderful earth with a mother who loves and

cares for me. Not with someone who does not understand that death is an eternal part of life for which no one is responsible. I have tried so hard to win her love. I never make demands. I never complain. I keep the house clean and even help her to cook but nothing seems to work." She glanced at him, tears rolling down her face.

Bhaskar did not know what to say. He was at a loss. He could not understand the situation. To him a mother was the only person who could give selfless love. His mother and wife were both commendable examples of that. What was happening here, in this poor girl's life? They both got out of the car and walked towards a fallen tree and sat down. He waited till she stopped crying and was calm. Then he took her hand in his and said in a soft voice, "Jhansi, you seem to be quite a mature person. Try to understand your mom. She has lost the most important person in her life. The pain is no doubt unbearable. Can't you see that she is unable to cope with the loss? In spite of everything, you have been well cared for. She has not abandoned you. Isn't that enough proof that she still loves you? Your mom needs you. Give her time to recover from the shock. Time heals. This sorrow will also pass. You have come this far. Have a little more patience. Don't throw away the gift of life. Let me come home and talk to her. I am sure I will be able to convince her."

Jhansi shook her head. "There is no point. My grandma and a lot of other people have tried." They sat silently for a whole five minutes. Then she looked up at Bhaskar and said most dejectedly, "I was wiping my father's photo and it crashed to the floor. The glass broke. I can't decide whether it was the glass that broke or my heart. Do you know what will happen when she comes home and finds it broken?" Another long pause. "I really don't want to go back and find out. But I suppose I have no choice. She got up and looked at Bhaskar and tried to smile. "Thank you uncle," she said. "I am sorry I wasted so much of your time. And it was really comforting talking to you." Bhaskar was at a loss for words He could only stare at her helplessly. In all his life he had not come across such a situation where a young girl would be so unhappy due to the foolishness of her own mother. He thought, "What am I supposed to do? How can I help the poor girl?" She was crying uncontrollably again as she walked away from him and started to cross the road. Blinded by the tears and the hopeless situation she was in, she did not notice the car that was approaching her at full speed. Bhaskar watched horrified as the car hit her and threw her a few feet away, her cries drowned by the loud screech of the tires as the driver tried his best to avoid the accident. Bhaskar and the other driver leaped out of their respective cars simultaneously and ran towards the unfortunate girl. One look at the girl and both men wondered if it was a hopeless situation.

Nonetheless, the two men picked up the bleeding and unconscious Jhansi and sped to the nearest hospital. Together they did the needful and waited till the doctor appeared and told them that everything that needed to be done has been done and that it may take some time before she regains consciousness.

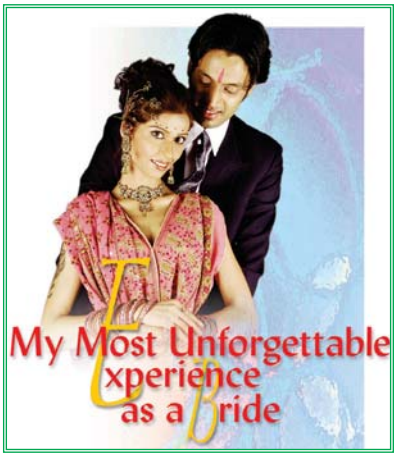
The driver gave Bhaskar his address and left. Bhaskar sat down in the waiting room and took out Jhansi's cell from her bag. It was already 10 p.m. The mother must be wondering where her daughter was. He began to search for the mother's number and realised that she did not have many friends. Too busy being unhappy, he thought as he scrolled. He found Amma and called. As he waited for the connection, he wondered if he should tell her that it was a suicide attempt. He was sure that the truth was what was required to make the mother realise that the child was unhappy. It could help to make the woman realise her folly. Anyway the girl did attempt suicide and if nothing had happened it was because he was an exceptionally good driver. Yes. He decided. 'I will tell her it was a suicide attempt.' The lady took her own time to pick up the phone. She sounded a little anxious. Was she worrying? He waited for her "Hello" twice before he spoke up, "Is this Mrs Malathi?" Minutes later Bhaskar put Jhansi's phone back into her bag and decided to wait for the mother. He had been brief, gave her the name of the hospital and waited. Whatever her feelings towards her daughter, she would come. She had to. Bhaskar decided against counselling her. If her daughter's decision to end her life did not make her realise her folly, no amount of counselling would. There was nothing he or anyone else could do. He sat down and picked up a magazine to kill time

They sat silently for a whole five minutes. Then she looked up at Bhaskar and said most dejectedly, "I was wiping my father's photo and it crashed to the floor. The glass broke. I can't decide whether it was the glass that broke or my heart. Do you know what will happen when she comes home and finds it broken?"

Fifteen minutes dragged by. He stood up as a woman in her forties, in a peach coloured sari walked in. She was very beautiful, very calm and collected. Bhaskar stared at the woman. He had been expecting an agitated and crying person to walk in. What was the matter with this woman, he wondered. Maybe she needed psychiatric help. He waited patiently. The woman stood at the entrance for some time then approached the receptionist. Bhaskar walked towards her and

enquired, "Are you Mrs Malathi?" The woman turned round and looked up at him. Bhaskar was shocked. She was not as collected as she appeared. The lady was distraught! Bhaskar was shaken by the pain in her eyes. There was no doubt that she had been crying all the way to the hospital! "Where....." She could say nothing more. She held a handkerchief to her face and gestured with her hands to ask where her daughter was. He guided her to a chair and waited patiently as she sobbed uncontrollably into her sari. Ten minutes later, she looked up and asked, "Can I see her now?" Bhaskar shook his head, "Doctors are with her now. They may be with her for another half hour. Let's have a cup of coffee while we wait." He called for coffee and while they waited for it to come, Bhaskar reluctantly opened the topic. "She jumped in front of my car." Malathi stared at him wide eyed, disbeliefies written all over her face. "Why would she do that?" she asked. Bhaskar took a deep breath. "Don't you know? She thinks you hate her." He paused. "Do you?" "Why would I hate my own daughter?" she wondered aloud then she added almost reluctantly, "I could have made her think so." "Yes, you have," he said and looked away. There was so much pain in those eyes. He had no idea how to explain to her that she had failed as a mother. But he had to do it. He turned towards her again and started to speak in a soft voice, "Providing is not the only duty of a parent. Have you forgotten the more important aspect called love? It is love that makes life beautiful and meaningful. If there had been a misfortune in your life, how is she responsible? Self-pity is not a remedy. It was neither your fault nor hers. You have made both your life and hers miserable by wallowing in self pity. Your attitude could jeopardise both your futures. Wake up at least now. Create a warm atmosphere and enjoy the good things in life with your only child. Give her the love and care she deserves unless you want to lose her as well." He guided her to the room where her daughter was still sleeping. She slowly walked into the room and sat down in the visitor's chair and took her daughter's hand in hers and stared at the sleeping girl. There was no reaction from Jhansi as she was under sedation. Malathi gently wiped her daughter's face and waited for her daughter to come back to her.

Bhaskar stood at the door with his hands in his pockets. He felt himself relaxing. The relief was almost painful. Everything happens for a reason, he thought. She needed that shock treatment, he decided as he walked out of the room towards his car.



A BELATED YES

My dream day, my wedding day had arrived in my life, I had waited a very long time for this day. The preparations were going on very well, I wanted everything to be perfect, from my dresses to make-up. But between the preparations, my sleep cycle was actually disturbed. I was with my friends, celebrating the last days of my bachelorhood, we were busy posting our pictures on Instagram.

A day before my wedding, Mehendi-cum-Haldi ceremony had got over late in the night, I had not slept a wink. I was hell sleepy; it was becoming very hard for me to open up my eyes. However, I managed to go for the nikah. The Nikah was going on. I tried my level best to stay awake but in vain. As soon as the ghunghat covered my face, my eyes were automatically closed.

The Qazi [priest], after getting the consent of the groom, came over to the ladies' section to get my consent to the wedding. When the priest repeated thrice the question, "Do you agree to be this man's lawfully wedded wife?" I didn't respond, and how could I, I was dreaming in my sleep. The guests started murmuring and my parents were in panic, no one had no idea about what to do now?

Finally, my sister lifted my ghunghat and when saw me asleep, she was both shocked and relieved. She shook me up and I opened up my eyes, startled and embarrassed, I managed to mutter a sheepish "YES".

Later that night, my husband confessed that he had waited with bated breath to hear my "YES", and how glad he was to hear it.

– Asmath Jahan

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ADVICE

READERS are advised to make appropriate and thorough enquiries before acting upon any advertisement. This magazine does not vouch for subscribe to claim any representation made by the advertiser regarding the particulars of status of what is offered.

MY SON HAS SYMPTOMS OF FLU. THE DOCTOR HAS SAID THAT we should observe him for a while. If they do not subside soon or worsen we might have to get him tested for Covid 19. How is he test done? Is it a blood test?

To test a person for coronavirus, a long swab stick is inserted in the nose or at the back of the upper part of the mouth to get a sample.

The latter induces a gag reflex (a) is the desire to vomit), the child can puke on the person taking the sample increasing the risk to the health worker, though he is fully protected with a PPE kit.

Coughed up phlegm (sputum) can also be used. Earlier it would take a few days for the report to come and patients were treated as Covid positive till the reports came but now a days rapid diagnostic tests are available for a quicker report.

●

WHAT IS THE WEIGHT GAIN PATTERN IN AN INFANT?

A newborn loses about 5-10% of his body weight in the first days of life as the swelling subsides. This is normal. The weight is regained within the next 7-14 days. Thereafter, there is a grain of 25-30gms per day. Standard charts for height and weight are available and your baby's height and weight will be marked on a graph on every visit to the pediatrician. Generally a baby doubles his birth weight in 4-5 months and triples it in one year.

●

I HAVE A THREE YEARS OLD DAUGHTER WHO HAS A DRY, SCALY reddish rash like lesion on her right cheek that keeps itching. What could it be due to? Why has it occurred and how do we treat it? Will she infect her siblings?

In all probability your daughter has atopic dermatitis. It occurs due to a combination of genetics and environmental factors. When the immune system is triggered, skin cells don't behave like they normally should, causing the skin to flare up resulting in lesions like your daughter has on her cheek. It is not contagious and therefore, will not spread to the people she comes in contact with. However, it can worsen with dryness of skin, stress, sweating, hoit and cold temperatures and allergens. The trick is to keep the skin well moisturized. Make sure that she wears soft 'breathable clothes and avoids things she is allergic to. If it worsen the dermatologist with prescribe creams that can be applied on the lesion. Remove common everyday allergens from your house.

– Dr Amrinder Bajaj, MD.

AS YOU SAY

SAFEGUARD THE FAMILY HEALTH

In the article, Family Mental Health Crisis, by Vidaya P, June 2021, the writer has touched a very sensitive issue of parental anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 period and its bad effects on the mental health of their children. Many parents are suffering from anxiety due to their inability to cope with the stress related to panademic and have gone into a depressive state of mind. They do not take any interest in the upbringing of their children as they have no control over their negative thoughts. Either they eat too much or eat too little and are ever in a gloomy mood.

Their careless attitude leads to their children's negligence and consequently the mental health of such children suffers. Lack of care makes them less confident and they too get mentally unstable.

The depressive parents should make the care of their children a priority and should excercise positivity all the time to come out their distress. They can indulge in some constructive activity of their choice but if their efforts fail to bring any positive result, they must seek professional help and can be well treated by medication and meditation. A general awareness should be spread about the family health issues in the pandemic time to safeguard the family health.

– Harinder Kaur, Jalandhar

INCOMPLETE BUT SENSIBLE LOVE & STORY

The story, The Incomplete Love Story by Manpreet Kaur, June 2021, is a very touching story highlighting the state of mind of a girl who has to suppress her feelings of love for a boy who is totally from a different religion. She is a high spirited, intelligent and efficient girl and is in love with a boy but later on both she her companion realise that they are totally mismatched and they part ways. She wonders why she doesn't regret on this separation but soon finds a reason for this. She has a childhood friend with whom she bonds very well and finds a perfect partner in him but before expressing her feelings of love to him she tell her decision to her another fast friend. This friend of her points about the religious of the boy which was entirely different from her religion. She visualises the harrasment and shame her parents will feel in society and they may even desert her forever. She forgets altogether to express her feelings.

It is the story of many such people who are in love but sacrifice their feelings despite having compatibility and intense love. If two persons from the the totally different background or religion tie a knot, they have to face the wrath of the society and their own family.

The incidents of honour killing have come to light also where the couple was punished for going against the sociatial norms.

We should rise above our opinions based on caste, creed and religion and allow two people in love to love to live in peace if they want to marry or have married each other even after going against our wishes as everyone deserves to have his or her share of happiness.

– Harinder Kaur, Jalandhar

The prize is awarded to:
Preetha Rengaswamy

PERSONAL HYGIENE MATTERS

The article 'The Toilet Etiquette' article June '21, was an interesting need, & the 'need of the hour' during such pandemics. No doubt, personal hygiene is equally important to save ourselves from viral attacks, be it even common flu. While our Central Government is taking all steps to create "Swatch Bharath" like toilet construction, to prevent open defacation, we the public, are also equally responsible for it. In rural areas, the Village Panchayats with the help of NGO's can create e-toilets, as its maintenance is easier.

Keeping toilets clean & pouring water, has to be done by the person using it, more so, if its a common toilet. Government or the provider can never be blamed if it is badly maintained & stinking. Open defacation, very common in villages & slum dwellers in cities should be aware of how life- threatening, their indecent act pollutes the land & is hazardous to their own health.

– Preetha Rengaswamy, Chennai

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